Comelec chief urged to return home ASAP

Story on Page A2

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'Millionaire' execs unhappy on pay cut

By Juliet L. Javellana

PRESIDENT Macapagal-Arroyo's order to cut down the multimillion-peso salaries and benefits of executives of government-owned and controlled corporations is meeting resistance.

The Department of Budget and Management, which the President ordered to study the pay practices in the government, is encountering dif-

MILLIONAIRE/ A20

GMA blows top over wrong tape

By J. Javellana

"MALI yan! Mali yan! (That's the wrong one!)"

A videotape purportedly showing President Macapagal-

GMA/ A21

MALI!!!!!!
YAAAAN.!?!

Pro-Ping Navy unit axed

SPECIAL honors go to the blind wunderkind, Roselle Ambubuyog, mathematics graduate, summa cum laude of the Ateneo de Manila University during rites honoring this year's Ten Outstanding Students in the Philippines. JOAN BONDOC

AFP chief acts on 'worst case scenario'

By Carlito Pablo

OPERATING on "a possible worst-case scenario," the military has disbanded an elite Navy unit identified with the camp of Senator-elect Panfilo Lacson.

Armed Forces spokesperson Brig. Gen. Edilberto Adan yesterday confirmed that the AFP chief of staff himself, Gen. Diomedio Villanueva, ordered the disbanding "a few days ago" of the Special Reaction Unit (SRU) of the Navy's Special Warfare Group.

Asked if the disbanding of the SRU had something to do with the reported destabilization threat against the Macapagal administration and the unit's association with Lacson, once the fair-haired boy of ousted President Joseph Estrada, Adan said: "That is the implication."

The unit is said to be the elite within the elite Special Warfare Group. Its expertise covers demolitions, commando tactics and special military operations.

According to Adan, Villanueva believed it was "more prudent" to disband the SRU, composed of three officers and 77 men, and which was previously attached to the Presidential Anti-Organized Crime Task Force.

Lacson was concurrent head of the PAOCTF—which President Macapagal-Arroyo has since ordered disbanded—when he was director general of the Philippine National Police.

"To the mind of the chief of staff, it was better to consider a possible worst-case scenario," Adan said without elaborating.

Earlier this week, Villanueva said the supposed destabilization threat against the Macapagal administration was "real," and that the country was living with this menace "day by day."

"What we know is that (the SRU) has been receiving special

PRO-PING/ A20

TOUGH-FISTED President is in fighting form as she receives boxer Manny Pacquiao, who won the International Boxing Federation super bantanweight title in Las Vegas, Nevada. JOAN BONDOC

Nation honors best, brightest students

By Christine Avendaño

THERE was much weeping at yesterday's ceremony in Malacañang honoring the Ten Outstanding Students in the Philippines (TOSP) for this year.

Overwhelmed by emotion, summa cum laude graduate Rutchelle Enriquez burst into tears when she was named one of the 10 from among 30 finalists nationwide.

The ceremony was highlighted by President Macapagal-Arroyo's presentation of a special recognition award to blind student Roselle Ambubuyog, a mathematics graduate (summa cum laude) of the Ateneo de Manila University.

It was the first time in the TOSP's nearly 40 years of existence that it gave such an award.

Ambubuyog, who was accompanied by her father, said she was now working for her master's degree in applied mathematics at the Ateneo, and was actually hurrying to leave for a class.

"I feel so blessed," said Enriquez, now a biology teacher at her alma mater, the Leyte Normal University in Tacloban City. "I didn't expect to win because we're all fairly good here, being summa cum laude and all, and being good leaders."

Clutching her glass trophy, she shed more tears while saying that she was offering her award to God for giving her so many blessings.

While Enriquez wept the hardest when her name was announced, most of her fellow winners and finalists were in a similar teary state after finding out who among them had ended up as TOSP awardees.

Except for one who had to study for a board exam, all the finalists, along with their families and teachers, attended the awarding ceremony that had President Macapagal as guest of honor.

One teary-eyed finalist embraced her teacher, and the Inquirer overheard her saying she was sorry for not making it to

NATION/ A19

From lord of the ring to champion of the poor

By J. Javellana and TJ Burgonio

MANNY Pacquiao boxed his way out of the slums. Now, he will have to go back to his roots.

Richer by $40,000, his prize money as the International Boxing Federation super bantamweight champion, Pacquiao yesterday accepted President Macapagal-Arroyo's invitation to join her in her visitations to the slum areas of Metro Manila and other urban poor communities.

The boxing champ paid a courtesy call on the President after he received a hero's welcome upon his arrival in Manila late Wednesday night for scoring a sensational sixth-round stoppage of his South African opponent in Las Vegas, Nevada.

Malacañang described Pacquiao's victory as a whiff of fresh air in a country in crisis.

"Congratulations. You have given the country great honor," the President, dressed in formal barong dress, hailed Pacquiao as she received him at the Palace Music Room.

The President asked Pacquiao to tell her about his victory over defending champion Lehlohonolo Ledwaba of South Africa.

FROM/ A21

PAOCTF agent: Bentain buried alive

By Cathy Yamsuan

A CONFESSED participant in kidnappings allegedly staged by former members of the defunct Presidential Anti-Organized Crime Task Force (PAOCTF) said he was willing to bring investigators to the sites where kidnap victims were kept and where disappeared casino employee Edgar Bentain was buried alive.

Ador (not his real name) made the offer to National Bureau of Investigation director Reynaldo Wycoco in a meeting Wednesday.

Ador had signed a 23-page affidavit claiming he had worked as an agent of the PAOCTF and participated in some of the kidnappings it allegedly staged upon the orders of its erstwhile chief, Senator-elect Panfilo Lacson. The senator-elect concurrently headed the Philippine National Police and PAOCTF until last January.

Ador confirmed suspicions that the resurgence of kidnapping in the country was part of a plot to destabilize the Macapagal administration.

He said the kidnapping of Mary Grace Rosagas, daughter of Uratex owner Robert Cheng, on June 18 was part of the destabilization plot.

Ador also claimed that Lacson had also or-

PAOCTF/ A20

Justice's heart bleeds for Erap

By Volt Contreras
and Martin P. Marfil

A SANDIGANBAYAN justice presiding over the plunder trial of Joseph Estrada yesterday revealed in open court that he had a soft spot for the deposed president but said it did not affect his decision denying him house arrest.

Associate Justice Anacleto Badoy Jr. surprised the court when he said "my heart was bleeding" to grant Estrada house arrest "if only it was provided for in the law."

He recalled that when he was still Senate secretary, Estrada was still a senator—"the only senator who would fix my tie."

"No other senator has come that close to my heart," the justice said.

To the amusement of the court, he added that Estrada would also frequently compliment him on his looks, calling him *"guwapo."*

Badoy, who chairs the court's third division, said he may have been "inclined to grant him house arrest, but one has to be satisfied because there should be no special treatment."

His bout of nostalgia almost eclipsed the most serious issue in yesterday's hearing: the oral arguments on the defense panel's motion to quash the plunder charge against Estrada.

Badoy made his sentimental remarks after defense lawyers asked the court to allow the Estradas to attend the oath-taking of incoming San Juan Mayor JV Ejercito and Senator-elect Loi Ejercito at 2 p.m. today at the San Juan municipal hall, cradle of the clan's political dynasty.

JUSTICE'S/ A21

WHO'S the man behind the mask who has executed an affidavit on the alleged kidnappings staged by the PAOCTF on orders of its former head, Senator-elect Lacson? RANDY HORMILLOSA

4 colleges launch plan to turn Mendiola into 'zone of peace'

By Juliet Javellana

WHAT used to be the scene of many bloody riots, including the recent May 1 siege of Malacañang by pro-Estrada loyalists, may yet be a zone of peace.

The Mendiola consortium of four universities yesterday launched a three-year program to promote a "culture of peace" in the area and put an end to its reputation as the scene of many violent clashes between rally participants and government authorities.

President Macapagal-Arroyo attended the launching and released a dove to signify the conversion of the historic place into a "peace zone."

Because of its proximity to Malacañang, Mendiola has been a favorite rally site of anti-government protesters.

In the 1970s, the so-called Battle of Mendiola resulted to the death of four anti-Marcos rally

4 COLLEGES/ A21

Second FRONT PAGE

UMUWI KA NA, MAY KUDETA!

Come home now, Benipayo urged

BY GERALD G. LACUARTA

COMMISSION on Elections Chair Alfredo Benipayo has been urged by some quarters to return to the country—and fast.

Even his top lieutenant in the poll body, Commissioner Rex Borra, said yesterday he has phoned Benipayo to tell him to hurry home from Sweden to attend to pressing matters at the agency, among them the brewing power struggle among the six commissioners who stayed behind.

"I called him to tell him to return home immediately," Borra said.

Borra confirmed earlier reports that Benipayo was being pressed by his staff to cut short his attendance at two seminars in Stockholm, Sweden, scheduled up to July 1, to nip the leadership crisis at the Comelec.

Benipayo, in a memorandum issued before he left on June 22, appointed Borra officer in charge for administrative and financial matters "with full signing authority," and Commissioner Rufino Javier as OIC for judicial and quasi-judicial matters. The designations were to remain in effect until his return on July 3.

Four Comelec commissioners, however, including Javier, issued Resolution 4488 setting aside Benipayo's appointment of the OICs and installed Javier as acting chair.

Borra said yesterday he will assert his authority as OIC. He issued a memorandum declaring Resolution 4488 illegal.

The clamor for Benipayo's early return to Manila was joined yesterday by a number of party-list groups and lawyers from the Puwersa ng Masa who are awaiting the Comelec's decision on the party-list and senatorial canvassing issues.

Akbayan Rep. Etta Rosales said Benipayo should not have left in the first place, when the Comelec was pressed to resolve issues on the party-list and senatorial elections before June 30, when the terms of congressmen and senators will start.

"I find it very unfortunate that Chairman Benipayo left when there were so many crucial decisions to be made," Rosales said in an interview at Borra's office.

"More than anything else, Benipayo should be around to exercise his leadership and unify the fractious elements in the Comelec," Rosales said. "He should come home ASAP (as soon as possible)."

Former immigration commissioner Rufus Rodriguez, counsel for the PnM, also called for Benipayo to return before June 30 so the National Board of Canvassers could resolve petitions contesting 180,000 votes for Sen. Ralph Recto, and come up with a final senatorial tally before June 30.

"Benipayo should come home now and resolve these issues, otherwise people might suspect his absence was being used as an excuse to delay the resolution of the petitions against Recto and the administration candidates," Rodriguez said.

Rodriguez said the Comelec would be setting a bad precedent if it allowed June 30 to pass without even the senatorial tally being completed. He said the 12th and 13th place senators would not be able to take their oaths of office.

"This matter cannot be taken for granted because there is a sense of urgency here," Rodriguez said. "The Comelec could be held liable for abandoning its sworn duty."

Rodriguez said if Benipayo won't come home soon, the remaining six commissioners could constitute a quorum in the en banc and decide on the petitions even in the chairman's absence.

"We could open the certificates of canvass and statements of votes in the areas we have questioned in only four hours," Rodriguez said. "There's still time to do this but the NBC must first decide on our petitions."

The 40-member Coalition of Marginalized Party-list Groups (CPAG) also called on Benipayo to cut short his trip in order to attend to hearings ordered by the Supreme Court to determine the qualifications of the 164 accredited party-list groups.

"The protracted internal disputes and factionalism in the Comelec could stand in the way of fair and transparent resolution of pending party-list matters," said Vic del Fierro, CPAG chair.

Fierro said some cases and petitions filed before the May 14 elections have not been acted upon up to now.

"These internal squabbles among the commissioners severely jeopardize the competence of the Comelec in faithfully complying with its sworn Constitutional mandate," Fierro said.

How much is Crame worth–₱4B or ₱98B?

JUST how much is Camp Crame, the Philippine National Police's headquarters, really worth?

This question cropped up after the PNP itself came out with conflicting figures on the value of its camp which sits on prime real estate in Quezon City.

The PNP directorate for logistics estimated the land and all the camp's assets were worth P98.6 billion.

The PNP accounting division, on the other hand, said the camp was worth only P4.1 billion, or a difference of P94 billion.

The directorate for logistics estimated the land at P96.7 billion, the buildings and other structures at P527.83 billion, and equipment at P1.3 billion.

The accounting division, on the other hand, said the land on which the police headquarters sits is worth P11 million, while the buildings and other structures are worth P328.2 million.

Equipment and furniture were valued at P3.8 billion.

The figures were contained in a Commission on Audit report shown to the media yesterday.

The accounting division explained that its figures were based on the acquisition cost of the property, contracts and purchase orders.

The logistics directorate said that its figures were based on estimates made by PNP engineering services.

The COA, however, said these assessments could not be considered reliable as there was no physical count and listing of assets.

Records showed the PNP leadership on Oct. 11, 1999 created a team to make an inventory of the PNP's fixed assets, but the team failed to come up with a report. This was during the tenure of Director General Panfilo Lacson, who has since been elected senator. *Martin P. Marfil*

High court allows Imelda to leave RP

FORMER first lady Imelda Marcos has been granted permission to travel abroad by the Supreme Court to seek treatment for a skull injury she suffered in December.

The high court's first division granted Marcos 45 days' "leave to travel to the US, France and Saudi Arabia to undergo Positron Emission Tomography and alternative medical evaluation and treatment."

She will be allowed to leave the country tomorrow, to return by Aug. 12.

The SC, however, restricted her travel to the three countries and demanded a bond of P50,000 to ensure her return, at which time she is to report to the court to present her passport.

Marcos had asked the SC to allow her to travel so she could consult with three specialists on the skull injury she suffered in a fall at her San Juan home last year.

Marcos has a pending graft case before the SC's first division.

"It is important that she leave immediately to avoid a stroke or other complication," said her attending physician, Dr. Roberto Anastacio of the University of Sto. Tomas Hospital, in a medical certificate.

Marcos was operated on at the Makati Medical Center after she hit her head.

Anastacio said Marcos has to undergo more post-operative procedures to determine if the blood circulation in her brain has returned to normal.

He said the Positron Emission Tomography, or skull trauma therapy, Marcos needs to undergo is not available in local hospitals.

Marcos said she will consult Dr. Stephan Meyer of the Presbyterian Columbia Neurologic Institute and Dr. Coleman Ryan of the Columbia Medical Center in New York.

She would then proceed to France to seek the opinion of Prof. Jean Leon Guermonprez of the Hospital Broussals.

The last 10 days of her trip will be spent in Saudi Arabia where she will "undergo further alternative medical evaluation and treatment" under Dr. Mohd Eid Rawzy of the King Faisal Specialist Hospital and Research Center. *Rocky Nazareno*

Outgoing gov faces fund raps

BAYOMBONG, Nueva Vizcaya—Two days before he was scheduled to bow out of office, Ifugao Gov. Ildefonso Dulinayan was arrested by National Bureau of Investigation agents for allegedly collecting illegal commissions from contractors.

Two others—a contractor and a Sangguniang Kabataan (SK) chair who was the governor's alleged bagman—were also arrested yesterday on the same charges.

NBI agents identified the two as Aivan Baguilat, Ifugao SK chair, and Neil Sakai, a contractor.

The NBI said Baguilat was caught in a sting operation, and allegedly accepted P30,000 in marked money from undercover agents posing as contractors. He tried to escape and pass the money to Sakai, agents said.

The arrests came following complaints from several contractors in Ifugao that Dulinayan had allegedly been collecting 10 percent or more of the cost of public works projects of the Ifugao provincial government.

Dulinayan denied the NBI accusations. "I never talked to or made transactions with contractors," he said.

Sakai also claimed innocence, saying he was dragged into the case when Baguilat tried to pass the unmarked money, wrapped in a package, to him in an attempt to escape the NBI agents. He said he did not know that the package contained cash. *Ben Moses Ebreo, PDI Northern Luzon Bureau*

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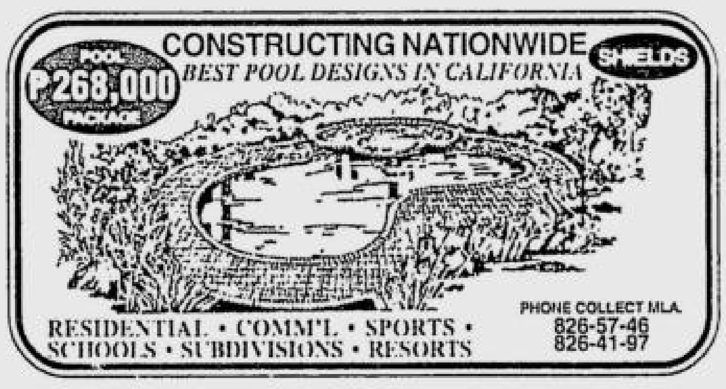
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Tutors go high-tech to collect their pay

PUBLIC school teachers will now be able to get their salaries on time through automated teller machines, after the Department of Education, Culture and Sports launched its check-less payroll system.

Education Secretary Raul Roco said the new payment system is also expected to eliminate corruption and usurious practices on the part of those who lend money to teachers.

The check-less system has been launched in Camarines Sur where accounts are being opened for DECS employees at the Land Bank of the Philippines.

Roco, who had been pushing for the direct payment of teachers' salaries since he assumed the top DECS post, said negotiations are being finalized with other banks in other regions for the teachers' new accounts.

At the same time, DECS officials urged public school teachers to refrain from borrowing money from loan sharks and getting themselves entangled in debt.

Public school teachers are notorious for getting into loan traps with moneylenders because oftentimes their salaries are delayed.

"The check-less payroll system should also encourage teachers to save. Since their salaries will now come on time, they would not need to borrow money (elsewhere)," Education Undersecretary for Finance Ernesto Pangan said in a press briefing yesterday.

Roco said next in line to plug into the check-less system will be the Quirino Elementary and High schools in Quezon City, which are also planning to open accounts at Landbank.

Blanche S. Rivera

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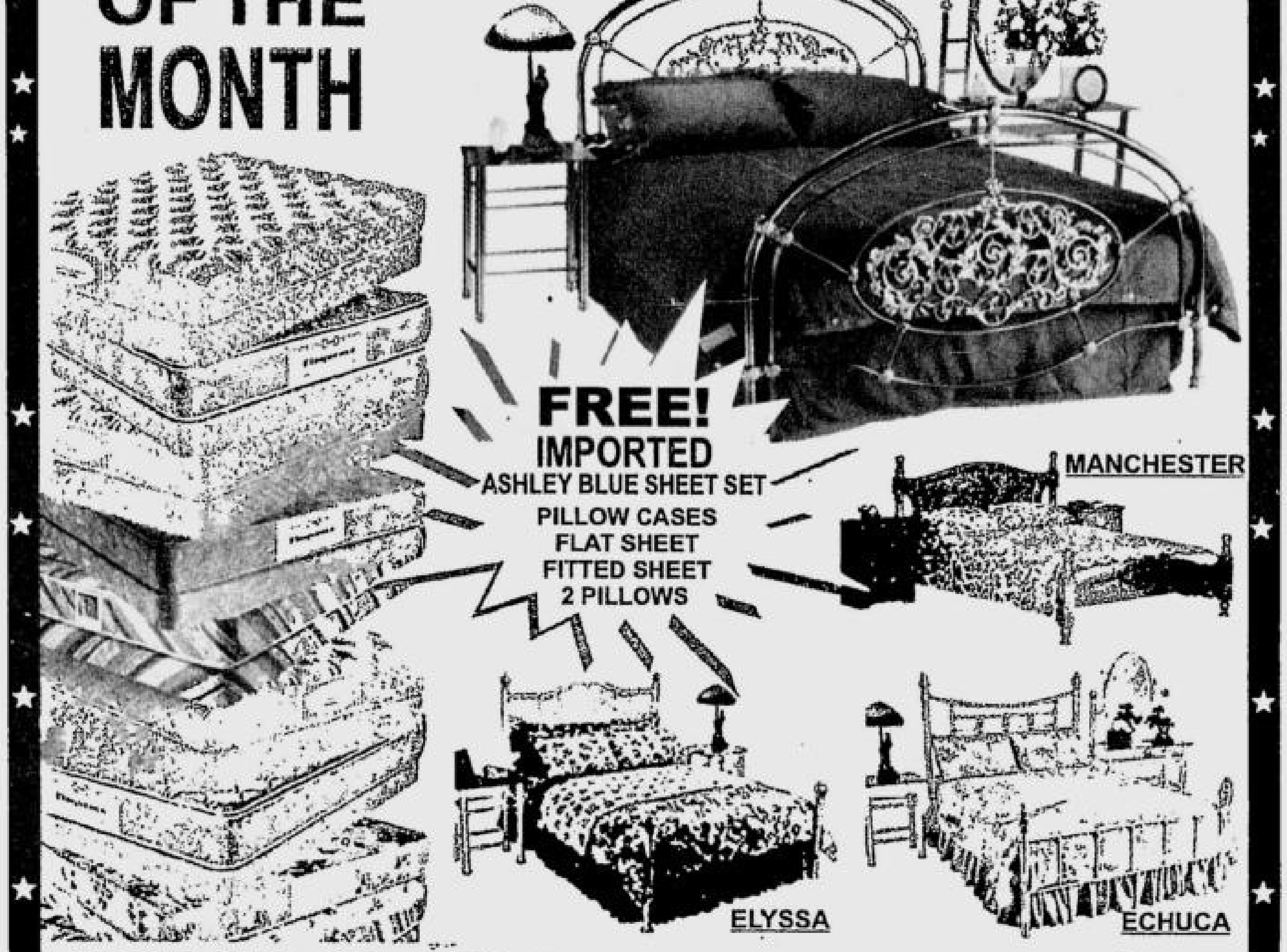

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NOTICE OF ANNUAL STOCKHOLDERS' MEETING

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that the Annual Stockholders' Meeting of this Corporation will be on **20 July 2001, Friday at 2:00 p.m. at Sacramento Valley Resort, Tanay, Rizal** to consider the following agenda:

1. Call to Order;
2. Certification of Notice and Quorum;
3. Reading and Approval of the Minutes of the Annual Stockholders' Meeting on 26 June 2000;
4. Approval of the Annual Report and Audited Financial Statements for the year ended 31 December 2000;
5. Ratification of the acts and resolutions of the Board of Directors and Officers since the last annual meeting;
6. Approval of the amendment of the Articles of Incorporation, changing the principal office from Tanay, Rizal to Cagayan de Oro City;
7. Approval of the amendment of the Articles of Incorporation and By-Laws, reducing the number of Directors from eleven (11) to seven (7);
8. Election of Directors for the ensuing year;
9. Appointment of External Auditor;
10. Other matters; and
11. Adjournment.

Registration will start at 1:00 p.m. Please bring some form of identification, such as Driver's License, Credit Card, or Voter's ID.

Only Stockholders of Record as at 5:00 p.m., 30 April 2001 shall be entitled to vote at and attend said meeting.

19 June 2001, Pasig City, Metro Manila.

OLIVA P. PEDERE
Corporate Secretary

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AFTER MAYON ERUPTION

Outbreak of disease feared

By Rey Nasol
PDI Southern Luzon Bureau

LEGAZPI CITY—Acute respiratory diseases have downed 57 persons in various shelters around Mayon Volcano, barely five days after an initial eruption sent close to 50,000 residents fleeing to evacuation centers.

The afflicted evacuees were found in five towns and two cities of Albay, a health report said.

The Department of Health has called on local government units to monitor daily the situation at the shelters and the condition of the evacuees.

DOH Bicol regional director Gerardo V. Bayugo made the recommendations after medical teams helping the local governments discovered the 57 cases of acute respiratory infection on its second day of working in the camps.

The DOH recorded only seven cases of the disease at the start of evacuation activities.

Thirty-seven cases of cough and colds and one case of hypertension were also registered and given medical attention, Bayugo said.

The breakdown of the outbreak is as follows:

Tabaco City had one case of acute respiratory infection (ARI); Malilipot, 12; Sto. Domingo, 4; Legazpi City, 14; Daraga, 17; Guinobatan, eight, and Ligao, one case.

Legazpi City reported three cases of diarrhea; Daraga, 2, and Guinobatan, 5.

Tabaco City had 23 cases of cough and colds while Legazpi City had 14 cases.

Health authorities warned that the growing number of evacuees could aggravate the congestion at the centers and lead to the further spread of disease.

The number of evacuees rose to 45,029 from Wednesday's 43,529 persons.

The risks at the camps, health officials said, could come from the water, food, garbage and human waste, all of which they are monitoring to prevent the spread of illness.

Initial damage to agriculture in the areas around Mayon has been placed at P22 million.

Crops were the hardest-hit, with an initial damage estimate of P15 million, while damage to fisheries was placed at P7 million.

Agriculture officials have yet to come up with figures for losses to irrigation facilities and livestock.

Bayugo said the DOH has also started giving immunization shots against measles to children.

Health officials have also begun putting chlorine in the water distributed by fire trucks in the evacuation centers to prevent water-borne diseases, Bayugo said.

The volcano itself continued to rumble and pump out lava flows, indicating it could muster another explosive eruption, experts warned Thursday.

"There is still a high level of unrest. Lava is still coming out and flowing to the downslopes," government volcanologist Eduardo Laguerta said.

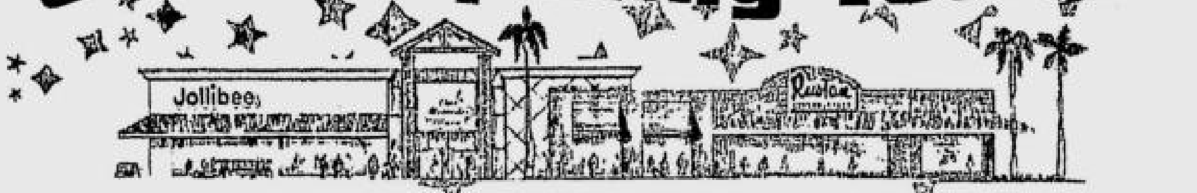
"There is still volcanic activity taking place so it is very possible it will intensify again," he said.

The highest level of a five-step alert remained in effect, barring people from an eight-kilometer danger zone around the volcano.

An aerial inspection of the 2,467-meter high Mayon found grayish smoke still coming out of its crater, with signs of fresh lava flow evident down one side of the mountain.

Laguerta said tremors were still being detected within Mayon and if they continue, "it is likely there will be another explosive eruption" like the blast on Sunday that sent flames into the night sky, terrifying residents.

Most of the evacuation centers are schoolhouses which have become swiftly overcrowded, raising fears of epidemics breaking out due to the congestion and inadequate sanitation. *With Blanche S. Rivera and Reuters and AFP reports*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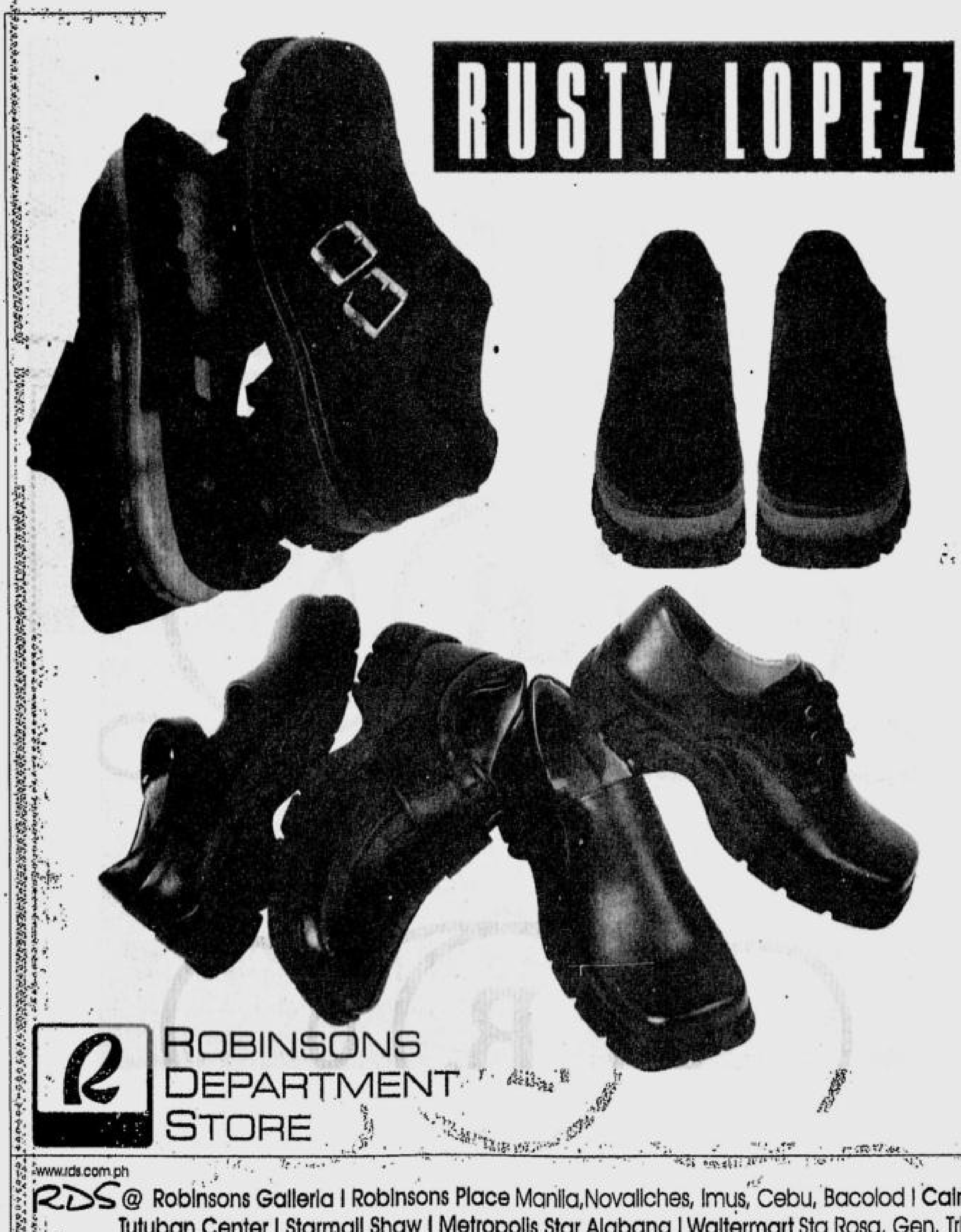
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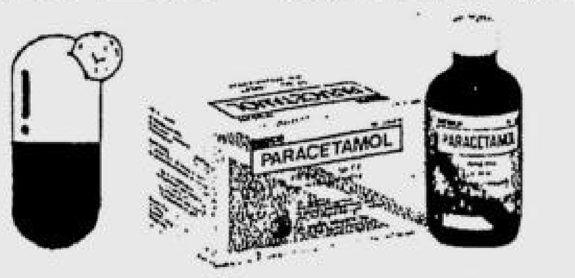
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Bangko Sentral rushes to Equitable's defense

By C. S. Batino

A FEW months after recovering from a crisis, Equitable PCIBank is again threatened by rumors of a bank run.

The Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas quickly rushed to Equitable PCI's defense and assured the public that the country's third largest bank as well as the entire banking system was financially sound and strong.

"No bank is declaring a bank holiday or filing for bankruptcy," BSP Governor Rafael Buenaventura said yesterday.

According to rumors circulated mostly through text messages, Equitable PCI is about to declare a bank holiday. Sources said the rumors were coming from Equitable PCI's clients in Binondo, Manila.

A banking source said it was actually Equitable Leasing that had been experiencing liquidity problems.

A BSP official said the leasing firm had no ties with Equitable PCI, except for the fact that some of the bank directors are also sitting on the board of the leasing firm.

The leasing firm was set up by George Go, who resigned as chair of Equitable PCI at the height of the Senate impeachment trial of former President Joseph Estrada.

"Some people suspect that Equitable Leasing and Equitable PCI are related when they are not. I think the leasing firm is having problems and its investors are not happy," a BSP source said.

To quell the rumors, Equitable PCI has been coming up with paid advertisements denying any financial stress.

Newly installed Equitable PCI president Deogracias Vistan also noted that the bank had recovered 70 percent of the funds withdrawn from the bank and had paid half of its P30-billion emergency loan to the central bank.

Buenaventura said the rumors were "absolutely false and without basis."

Buenaventura recalled that similar text messages were circulated at the beginning of the year and that the panic subsided only when the public had realized the rumors were not true.

Equitable PCI was hit by massive withdrawals when it was revealed during the impeachment trial that Estrada owned a secret account in the bank.

Sources said depositors withdrew as much as P80 billion from the bank from October last year to January this year.

The crisis forced Go to resign as Equitable PCI chair last December. He was replaced by Ricardo Romulo who had to give up his post after his cousin Alberto Romulo was appointed finance secretary in January.

Romulo was replaced by Peter Go Pailan who, in turn, handed over the post to Antonio Go in April.

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Suspected Abu kidnapper nabbed in Zamboanga City

A SUSPECTED member of the Abu Sayyaf kidnap gang has been arrested near the headquarters of the military's Southern Command in Zamboanga City, police yesterday said.

Supt. Mario Yanga, Zamboanga police chief, identified the suspect as Karim Hassan, an alleged Abu Sayyaf intelligence officer and close aide to Abu Sayyaf leader Khadaffy Janjalani whose group is holding several foreign and local hostages in Basilan.

Hassan, also known as Kiram Saraji, Esping Kimar, and Abu Kaki, was arrested while he was having lunch at Campo Islam in Lower Calarian.

Hassan, however, denied being a member of the bandit group.

"This fellow has been the subject of a manhunt," Yanga said.

According to him, Hassan is wanted for a string of kidnappings in Western Mindanao last year. He allegedly took part in the abduction of Catholic priest Rhoel Gallardo and more than 50 Filipino students and teachers in Basilan in March last year.

The children were freed but the rebels killed four teachers and the priest, who was found hogtied, his nails plucked out and with a single shot to the head.

"Anybody can move freely but for those who are wanted, Zamboanga is not safe for them. The place for them is behind bars," Yanga said.

Hassan is the third member of the bandit group to fall into government hands in two weeks.

On Wednesday, the military announced it had foiled a plot by the rebels to bomb vital installations in Metro Manila after it arrested Harsim Abdulajid, who confessed to being a member of the Abu Sayyaf "urban intelligence unit."

Abdulajid was arrested on June 17 at the Food Terminal Inc. complex in Taguig. He was allegedly under orders to establish a safehouse for other Abu Sayyaf members who were to stage bombings in the capital.

A third suspected Abu Sayyaf member, Abdullah Yusof, was arrested last week in Zamboanga City. He is reportedly undergoing tactical interrogation in Camp Aguinaldo.

Yusof, also believed to be an intelligence operative of the Abu Sayyaf, has reportedly provided significant leads in the ongoing campaign in Basilan, according to the military.

The Abu Sayyaf are holding up to 23 American and Filipino hostages in Basilan's jungles in a hostage crisis that has now entered its second month.

Basilan Rep. Gerry Salapuddin is urging the provincial government to provide medical aid to the 23 hostages.

"I am willing to initiate and extend humanitarian services to these hostages but local officials should move first," Salapuddin said. *Reports from Julie Alipala-Inot, Alexander Young and Allan Nawal, PDI Mindanao Bureau; and AFP*

HARSIM Abdulajid: a suspected member of the Abu Sayyaf 'urban intelligence unit' in Metro Manila.

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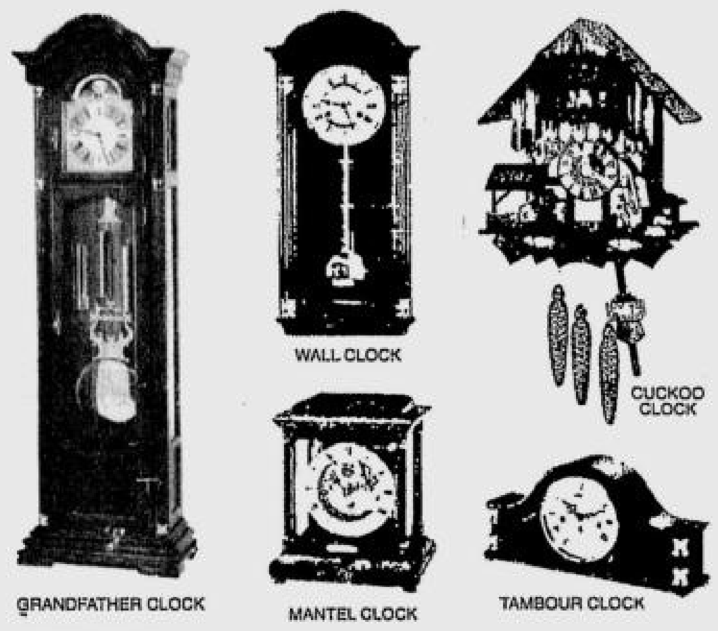

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MILF told to go before 'big battle'

ISABELA, Basilan—Rebels belonging to the Moro Islamic Liberation Front which signed a truce with the government last week were urged yesterday to clear out of the island to avoid being caught in a military advance on Abu Sayyaf bandits holding 23 hostages.

Government troops were on the verge of a "decisive battle" with the Abu Sayyaf bandits, but the presence of MILF gunmen in Basilan complicated the situation, a military spokesperson said.

Troops were walking a delicate tightrope, trying to abide by a six-day-old ceasefire aimed at ending a 23-year MILF insurgency, while hunting down the Abu Sayyaf to end a month-long hostage crisis, he said.

"Their presence complicates our work," Brig. Gen. Edilberto Adan told a radio station, saying MILF rebels risked being caught in crossfire.

Military intelligence reports said the Abu Sayyaf bandits were trying to draw the Army toward MILF bases to widen the war.

There have been a series of clashes between government troops and the Abu Sayyaf in recent days as the Army advanced toward a mountainous area called the Sampinit complex in the center of the island.

Although official estimates put the size of the Abu Sayyaf at less than 500 armed men, Adan said he believed other armed groups were providing the bandits with protection.

"We have more than 1,000 armed elements on the island," Adan said earlier this week.

Remnants of the MILF and the Moro National Liberation Front, which signed a peace accord with the government in 1996, were also active, he said.

The military, which has poured more than 5,000 troops into Basilan and has been criticized for not ending the hostage crisis sooner, has reshuffled the leadership of the task force closing in on the Abu Sayyaf.

Brig. Gen. Romeo Dominguez was replaced by Brig. Gen. Glicerio Sua, who was responsible for the rescue of many local and foreign hostages held by the Abu Sayyaf on nearby Jolo island last year.

On Thursday, the military airlifted supplies to the troops and soldiers brought back weapons seized after one battle, including a long knife like those used to decapitate hostages.

At least four hostages have been beheaded.

The Abu Sayyaf bandits are believed to be holding American missionary couple Martin and Gracia Burnham and eight Filipino hostages. A second Abu Sayyaf group is holding 13 Filipinos elsewhere in the island.

The Burnhams and another American, Guillermo Sobero, were seized along with 17 Filipinos at the Dos Palmas resort on May 27. The rebels later snatched four hospital staff and 15 plantation workers in Basilan.

Eleven hostages have escaped or been freed since the crisis began and four Filipinos have been killed. The bandits say they have also beheaded Sobero although his body has not been found. *Reports from AP and AFP*

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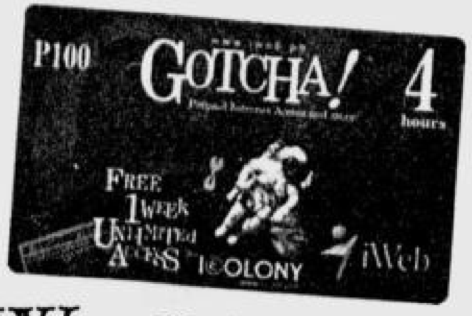

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Satur: Bayan Muna leaders threatened

LEADERS of militant groups have received warnings about death threats allegedly coming from rightist groups out to avenge the killing of Cagayan Rep. Rodolfo Aguinaldo.

"People in government and the New People's Army have been telling us about the threats against us. We have to take these threats seriously," Satur Ocampo, president of the Bayan Muna party-list group, told the INQUIRER yesterday.

Ocampo said he, Bagong Alyansang Makabayan secretary general Teodoro Casiño, Kilusang Mayo Uno chair Crispin Beltran and Gabriela secretary general Lisa Maza were among those on the supposed hit list.

He said "suspicious-looking men" had been tailing Maza.

"If something happens to any of us, I lay the blame on those who made the threats," Ocampo said.

He said the warnings started coming in before the May 14 congressional elections but heightened after Aguinaldo's killing by NPA assassins on June 12.

"According to our informants, these groups have vowed to avenge the death of Aguinaldo," Ocampo said.

He said "persistent reports" indicated that some members of the Philippine Military Academy Class '72, to which Aguinaldo belonged, and a faction of the Rebolusyonaryong Alyansang Makabansa-Young Officers Union were behind the alleged plot.

Ocampo described as disturbing a statement of Sen. Gregorio "Gringo" Honasan, Aguinaldo's colleague in the RAM-YOU.

Andrea T. Echavez

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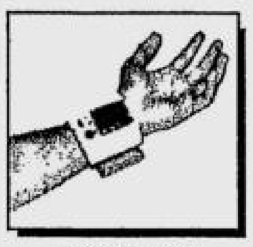
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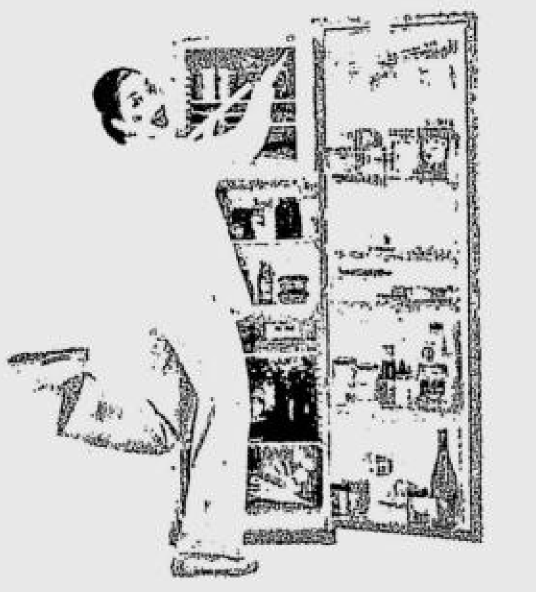
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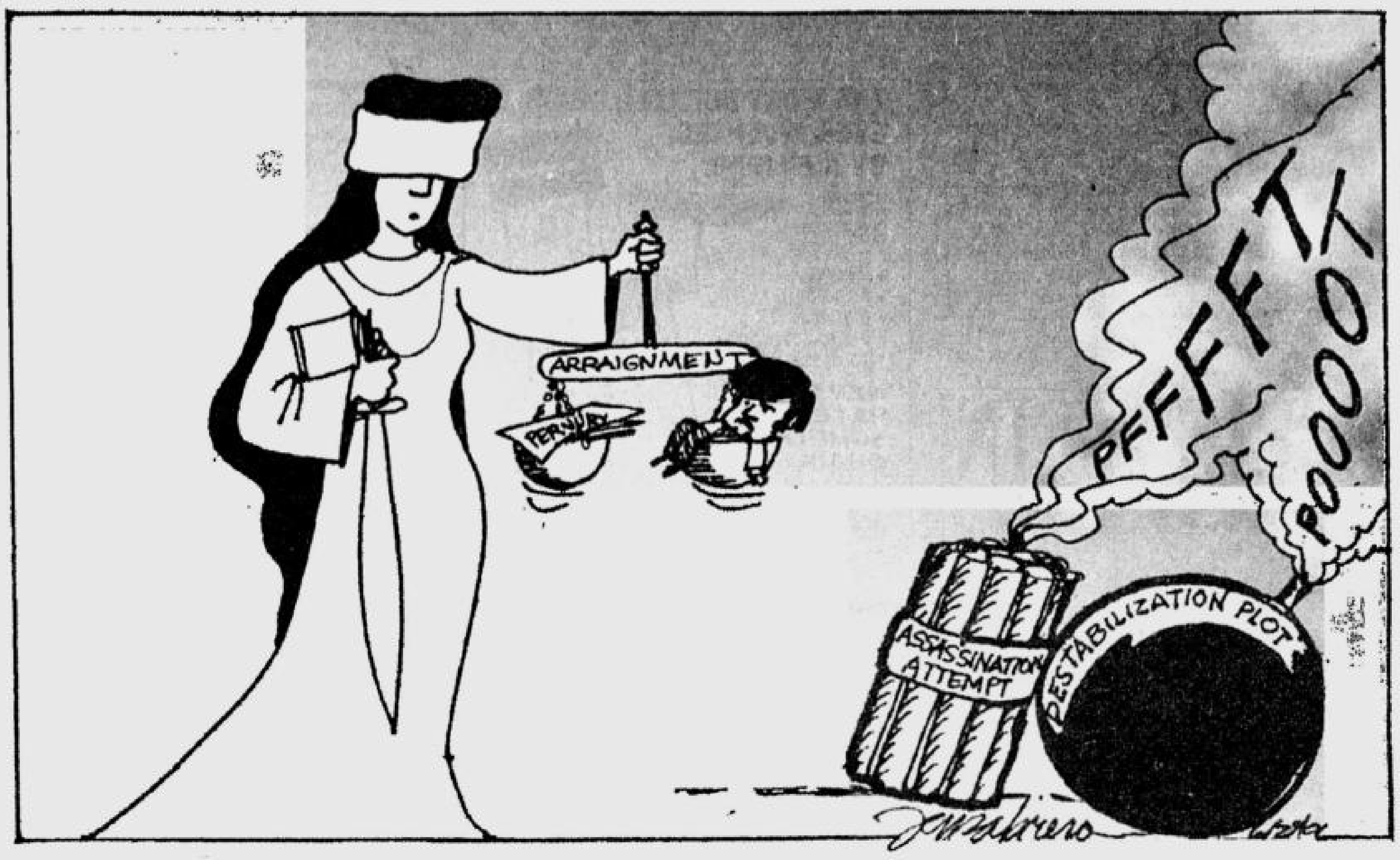

EDITORIALS

Payday

FOR MANY of those whom the government calls the gainfully employed, today is just another payday, the end of yet another working month. For top management at 14 government-owned and -controlled corporations (GOCCs) and government financial institutions (GFIs), however, today is one more blissful day in paradise.

The report prepared by the Department of Budget and Management confirms what many people, both in and out of government, have long suspected: Some public sector positions are lucrative, even by private sector standards.

Still, the scale of the high salaries involved, as released by Malacañang this week, is nothing short of shocking. We've always known that public office was a public trust; now we realize it's also a public trust *fund*.

According to DBM records, the chair of the Philippine Charity Sweepstakes Office receives a total compensation package amounting to almost P11 million a year. It may not be the fault of the incumbent chair, who was appointed to her post only last February. She has, in fact, already denied receiving such a generous package, but the DBM records suggest that the compensation structure has long been in place. Apparently, for the PCSO, charity truly begins at home.

In terms of basic salary, the highest paid public official is the chair of the Government Service Insurance System, who receives some P4.2 million a year (with a benefits package that adds about 50 percent more to the total). Again, the DBM records suggest that this liberal compensation scheme predates the incumbent chair. But it certainly reinforces the conventional wisdom that joining government service may yet be the best form of insurance within the system.

In contrast, the annual basic pay of the President of the Philippines is only P660,000.

To put an end to what Malacañang calls the "atrocious" salaries and benefits granted to top officials, the President has issued Memorandum No. 20, suspending any increase in the compensation package of the president, chair, chief executive officers, trustees and executive vice presidents of a total of 71 GOCCs and GFIs. She has also ordered these institutions to submit a "pay rationalization" plan in 30 days.

Pay dirt

EXCESSIVE salaries for certain public officials is a legitimate issue, and we commend the Macapagal administration for raising it.

At the very least, it is an effective preemptive strike. Instead of playing defense on something that is essentially indefensible, the administration has gone on the offensive. Even if its motives for raising the issue were strictly cynical—to preempt media organizations with an appetite for investigative muckraking; to enjoy for once what is called first mover advantage—it has done right by the public simply by calling attention to the issue and doing something about it.

But there is reason to believe that the administration raised the issue out of conviction. Excessive pay for public servants is eminently a governance issue, and from her first day in office the President has vowed to lead by example. Perhaps this is really all she means by that damning phrase "new politics"—leadership by example. Both the partners in the coalition that installed her in office and the new opposition have read much into the phrase, but perhaps this is all she means. Even in this limited sense, however, "new politics" includes the issue of compensation, of how public servants ought to be paid for rendering public service.

We will not go to the opposite extreme, and wish that all government officials forgo their salaries, or live as martyrs of public service. It is clear that the endemic problem of graft and corruption is rooted in part in inadequate compensation for government workers. To expressly counter this source of temptation, for example, the government of Singapore rewards its workers with some of the highest salaries in the world. The tiny state's president has a salary that is at least four times bigger than the salary of the president of the United States.

So the question, clearly, is: How much is good enough?

The answer, as we can learn from any compensation negotiation, is relative. It depends. But this much is clear: considering the present state of the nation, a salary-and-benefits scheme that pays a government official almost a million pesos a month is an abomination.

2 Botong paintings fetch ₱18 million

AS I SEE IT

Neal H. Cruz

CONSIDERING the traffic gridlock on Commonwealth Avenue and Batasan Road last Wednesday that resulted from the transfer of former President Estrada from the Veterans Memorial Medical Center to the Sandiganbayan for his arraignment, it might be a good idea to agree to the police proposal to hold Erap's trial at the VMMC auditorium. These two streets were closed to vehicular traffic while Erap was being moved from the VMMC to the Sandiganbayan and back. Residents of subdivisions along Commonwealth couldn't even get in or out of their homes because of this. Imagine the inconvenience to the people once the daily trial gets going.

Moreover, that one-day security preparations cost the taxpayers almost half a million pesos. Imagine the cost of the whole trial which, considering the dilatory tactics of the defense panel, can take years.

PNP Chief Leandro Mendoza, who was at the Thursday Club at Annabel's on Morato yesterday, said they were taking no chances. Some crazy cooks may really try to assassinate Erap to destabilize the Macapagal administration. That nothing happened last Wednesday doesn't mean the threat is over, Mendoza said. "We have to take every report seriously," he said. "You never know which one will be followed."

He said security preparations cost so much because the PNP had to bring in reinforcements from other regions. "If we use all the police forces in Metro Manila to secure the Sandiganbayan," he said, "criminals may take advantage of the lack of policemen in other areas to do their thing."

Did the pro-Erap forces change their plans after the discovery of the plot for another "Edsa 3 1/2"? Or did they give up completely? Did they recruit squatters for the planned demos? Why were there so few of them?

Mendoza said the pro-Erap forces did try to recruit squatters but that the recruiters were not so enthusiastic. The instructions were: "Go if you want to go," which means there was no assurance of pay afterwards. Besides, the downpour discouraged the participation of many, even of the anti-Erap forces.

Is the threat over? Not by a long shot. The police will consider the threat seriously every time they have to move Erap. "We're not taking any chances," the PNP chief said. Better safe than sorry.

* * *

Come to think of it, holding the trial at the VMMC is not such a bad idea. The hospital is easier to secure than the Sandiganbayan. It has a wide perimeter fence, with the golf course between it and the hospital building itself. Demonstrators can be kept at a distance so their noise will not disturb the proceedings. What's more, because of the distance, the hospital is safe from car bombs against which the Sandiganbayan, which is at the intersection of two main roads, is not. And it would be easy to close the short stretch of North Avenue in front of the VMMC without disturbing traffic as the closure of Commonwealth and Batasan Road did the other day.

* * *

Filipino contractors are up in arms against the bidding for the C-5/Ortigas Avenue Extension Interchange Project in Pasig City. There were nine international bidders but no Filipino contractors were pre-qualified. Of the nine, only two submitted bids: Sumitomo of Japan and Hanjin of Korea. Sumitomo won the bidding, but its bid is 28 percent above the agency estimate. In pesos, this means the government will have to pay P200 million more for the project.

Under normal and regular bidding projects, bids are usually below agency estimates by an average of 29 percent. But this one, where only two of nine pre-qualified bidders actually submitted bids, is 28 percent above agency estimate. The Filipino contractors see an international cartel or at least a conspiracy behind its unusual development. Why did the seven other pre-qualified bidders not submit their bids? And why were the pre-qualification rules made so stringent that not a single Filipino contractor could qualify?

The Filipinos proposed that pre-qualified contractors who don't submit bids should be banned from bidding for other projects for a period of at least one year. A repetition of the offense will be punished with a permanent ban.

And they asked that the bidding for the C-5/Ortigas interchange be nullified as it was disadvantageous to the government.

Yes, and to banish suspicions that there was collusion in the bidding.

* * *

INCIDENTAL INTELLIGENCE ON ART: Banker Alfonso Yuchengco paid P18 million for two oil paintings by National Artist Carlos V. Francisco. The sale was brokered by the late artist Roddy Ragodon, a member of the National Museum's Authentication Board.

This apparent "conflict of interest" raised the hackles of fellow member Alejandro Roces (now chair of the Movie and Television Review and Classification Board). He proposed an investigation. But poor Ragodon dropped dead of a heart attack before any investigation could be started.

If two easel paintings by Botong Francisco are worth P18 million, imagine what the huge mural by National Artist Vicente Manansala at the National Press Club will fetch. It should be enough to pay all of the NPC's debts (estimated at P19 million) and still have enough left over for a new mural by less expensive artists.

* * *

Comments are welcome at asiseeit@pacific.net.ph

Second thoughts

WINDMILLS

Jerry Barican

AT FIRST glance, the new executive order drafted by the Department of Budget and Management for the President requiring government-controlled corporations to reduce executive salaries appears eminently fair and reasonable. There have been reports of excessive annual incomes in some of these corporations, reaching in one reported instance more than P10 million annually for the Philippine Charity Sweepstakes Office chair. There are all kinds of allowances present, including some with odd and suspicious nomenclatures like "family allowance." These salaries are not pegged to other government salaries and seem wildly excessive to the casual observer, especially during a time of large government deficits. If aims and motives were the sole test, and not effectiveness, this would be a noble effort indeed.

But it ain't necessarily so. Had the DBM targeted particular acts of excess, or even confined its attempt to re-standardize salaries by focusing only on the salaries of the members of the governing boards of these institutions, there might be little to complain about.

But Secretary Emilia Boncodin's opus demonstrates conclusively that whatever her abilities, she has never had any experience outside the government bureaucracy, never had to meet a private corporate payroll, never had to manage a business. If she had, there would probably still be an executive order of a similar tenor, but not the one she induced the President to sign.

As drafted, the order faces horrendous practical and legal obstacles that would, by comparison, make a minefield seem like a sedate croquet lawn. There is the practical question of how you can reduce the salaries of senior officers, most of them career, without running afoul of the established legal rule prohibiting any diminution of compensation.

Or, even if you could freeze the salaries of executive vice presidents, how you would solve the problem of distortion in salary grades when, in the course of adjustment of the grades below them each time the government mandates it, you end up with lower-ranking officials receiving higher salaries than their superiors.

Moreover, if these new and lower ceilings are enforced across the board and without distinction, they will have the unintended but unavoidable effect of permanently freezing all salary grades below, which inevitably will result in labor unrest as well as court cases.

There are unresolved legal as well as philosophical issues, too. Congress, for sound reasons, exempted many of these institutions from government salary standardization and tied up the salaries to those in the industry in which these institutions were found.

Its intention was to make these corporations competitive with private institutions and by this means attract and keep able and competent staff which would ultimately yield profits in the form of dividends for a cash-strapped government. A bank that pays government, not banking industry, salaries will get what it pays for. This peculiarly capitalist idea is precisely what Secretary Boncodin, who believes in standardized and socialized pay, apparently finds so objectionable. Similar shortsighted ideas have, over the last 50 years, left us with inefficient and bankrupt government corporations.

It will no doubt also be questioned by any interested party whether a carefully crafted law enacted by Congress and signed by the President can be so easily and effectively set aside by executive fiat. Whichever side of the debate you might be on in this divide, you will not welcome loading the courts with more avoidable litigation.

There is also the practical matter of whether you can attract to the GOCCs a high-caliber senior management. These are career people and you will neither attract them or keep them when competitors in the banking or insurance industries, for instance, are willing to pay them a multiple of what Secretary Boncodin is willing to. This is called the law of supply and demand and by this shotgun approach to salary issues, the good secretary has just emulated the legislator who once wanted to repeal it.

The ultimate way to raise government revenue is by quality appointments which, historically, have also something to do with how much you pay, and by this means generating profits. Cutting expenses is also good capitalism because it produces a better bottom line, but the operating details are best left to a competent management. There are such things as micro-management and over-regulation.

Was there an alternative to this executive order? Clearly. Where government operates as a monopoly and there is no comparable private industry standard (e.g. PCSO), wages should be closely monitored and indexed to independent regulatory bodies like the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas. Individual cases of excessive compensation should be individually corrected, particularly when they are out of line with industry, not government, standards. The salaries of board members can be arbitrarily restricted although even in the short run, this will probably sharply diminish the pool of those able and willing to take on these onerous responsibilities.

But the salaries of chief executive officers and senior executives should be left to the sound discretion of the board managing the business and, in turn, tied by them to industry standards. The best way for shareholders to run a business is to assign the board a bottom line target and leave the complex operating details to the sound discretion of the board members and management. Even government can't exempt itself from good management practices and market forces and still expect to make a good profit.

Rejecting the judicial system

ANALYSIS

Amando Doronila

THE ARRAIGNMENT of deposed President Joseph Estrada on perjury charges came to pass on Wednesday without any disturbance and with Estrada declaring to the Sandiganbayan that he would not plead guilty or not guilty.

Both events unfolded significant developments. The first is that Estrada loyalists saw in his arraignment on plunder charges—originally scheduled for last Monday but postponed to July 10—and on the perjury charges an opportunity to stir up the urban poor into a mass demonstration similar to that in the run-up to the storming of Malacañang on May 1.

In brief, Estrada's cohorts saw in the arraignment an opening for a reprise of the May 1 rebellion.

That there was no turbulence on Wednesday near the Sandiganbayan, where some pro-Estrada demonstrators showed up, was not entirely due to the high alert and preparedness of riot police contingents. The reason for the low turnout of demonstrators is that there was weak response to Estrada's move to mobilize support from either the urban poor or the military. This is bad news for him.

Many Metro Manila suburban mayors, who provided the warm bodies for the Edsa rallies from April 25-30, did not want to be involved in new destabilization moves. The mayors have just been elected or reelected following the May 14 elections, and are looking forward to begin their terms, move ahead and deliver results. They were asked to deliver warm bodies for the planned rallies but they begged off, indicating what seems to be weariness on the part of the public with continuing political turbulence.

As in the April Edsa rallies, Estrada's cohorts made efforts to secure support from some generals and even from troop commanders, but, according to intelligence reports, they could not muster support from the ground either to stage a military coup or recruit even a core armed group to back a civilian demonstration. The dynamics that made the May 1 rebellion did not exist anymore.

President Macapagal was not rumormongering when she issued the warning last Sunday that Estrada followers were plotting to seize power or were stirring up street turbulence last Monday. The warning was based on the consistent flow of intelligence reports that the Estrada group was offering huge sums of money to military commanders to defect from the government and that fatigue uniforms were being cut in some tailor shops in San Juan. The plan was to dress with military uniforms hoodlums recruited by presidential allies in the municipalities, to present an illusion of military participation in the planned rallies. But the mayors did not deliver.

Elected local officials are sensitive weather vanes of the political climate. They know when a national leader is a lost cause. They perceive Estrada belongs to the past, and they can't tie their new administrations to the Estrada derelict.

The second development—the avoidance by Estrada to enter either a guilty or not guilty plea—foreshadows a bumpy road for the trial. It is a manifestation of the strategy based on throwing up obstacles to delay the trial in the Sandiganbayan, hoping that a more friendly government would be in power after the 2004 presidential elections.

But the more dangerous aspect of this strategy is that it sends the implicit message that Estrada does not recognize the judicial system and that he is above it. The defense's move last Wednesday sought to put him beyond the jurisdiction of the Sandiganbayan.

When Estrada appeared at the Sandiganbayan on Wednesday, he was as usual wearing his wristband with the presidential seal. As I know it, wristbands are worn by tennis players to wipe perspiration. Estrada is wearing it either to hide a blemish or to serve as an emblem of office—although the office of the presidency does not belong to him anymore. He continues to wear it to deliver the political statement that he is still president, despite the fact that he abandoned the presidency and that the Supreme Court knocked back two times, with a 13-0 decision, his challenge that he should be restored to the presidency.

The position Estrada took at the arraignment is another dimension, and is an extension of his continuing claim to the presidency. It is perfectly consistent with this claim, based on legal fiction, that he does not, by implication, recognize the legitimacy of the Sandiganbayan and its jurisdiction over the cases filed against him.

It is consistent with the continuing non-recognition by Estrada of the legitimacy of the successor government, and of the Supreme Court's authority as the final arbiter of judicial disputes. As far as he and his lawyers are concerned, they continue to assert that the judicial system—including the Supreme Court and the Sandiganbayan—has ganged up on him and the high court was unfair to him.

Estrada's rejection of the Supreme Court's decisions upholding the legitimacy of the successor government makes him an outlaw who has his own set of laws and who considers himself beyond the reach of the Republic's judicial system.

Consequently, his lawyers fabricate legal positions that place Estrada beyond the jurisdiction of the Sandiganbayan. They question the way the prosecution has packaged its cases, arguing that the perjury and plunder charges should have been merged. They are, in effect, telling the prosecution how to handle its case. If the defense's formula were followed, the defense would fight the case according to its own rules, and this is tantamount to leading the prosecution to a trap to set it up for annihilation. Presiding Justice Francis Garchitorena did not fall for this game, and so he exercised the option of declaring that Estrada had pleaded not guilty and emphatically asserted the court's jurisdiction.

Since Estrada and his lawyers consider themselves above the judicial system, they might as well constitute themselves into a shadow government, and his lawyers, a shadow Supreme Court, then hold a mock trial in the streets to acquit their client while playing karaoke each time they make a point.

Good news, bad news on party-list front

AT LARGE

Rina Jimenez-David

THERE'S a good side and a bad side to the recent decision handed down by the Supreme Court regarding the parties and organizations that participated in the last elections under the party-list system. The good side is that the "spirit of the law," or in this case, of the Constitution, has been upheld and firmly established. The bad side is that it may have come too late for some genuine sectoral parties and groups.

The Constitution makes clear that the party-list system was meant to rectify a basic flaw in Philippine politics. Despite our being a nominal democracy, our political institutions are far from democratic and remain the almost-exclusive preserve of the elite. The framers of the 1987 Constitution, then, inserted the party-list provision as a means of opening the doors of the elite-dominated Congress to representatives of specific basic sectors, groups of people who, because of poverty, the lack of organizing ability and cultural biases, have been historically left out of the decision-making processes. The Constitution thus sets aside 20 percent of the seats in the House of Representatives for party-list representatives, who are presumed to be sitting in Congress as representatives of the "marginalized and under-represented."

The party-list law, however, broadened the concept of "sectoral" group and even of what constitutes a "marginalized and under-represented" sector. Under the law, any organization whose leaders and members share a common concern and ideology could be accredited as a "party-list" group. Which is why even groups representing such influential sectors as businesspeople, real estate moguls, architects and contractors, even quasi-religious organizations, could be considered "party-list" groups. Political parties, which are able to field candidates from the local to the national level, were also allowed to participate and contest party-list seats, though there was a provision disallowing the five biggest parties from participating in the first party-list polls in 1998.

The Supreme Court decision, on the urging of party-list groups questioning the anomalous accreditation of certain organizations, reaffirmed the constitutional mandate and preference for "marginalized and under-represented" sectors seeking entry into Congress through the party-list system. Though it has left the matter of deciding which among the party-list groups are "genuine" and which are "bogus" to the Commission on Elections, the Supreme Court has made clear it considers as truly "marginalized and under-represented" only party-list groups that seek to promote the interests of the specific sectors mentioned in the Constitution.

* * *

BUT even as those supporting truly "marginalized and under-represented" groups in the party-list system heave a sigh of relief, there are also many vexing questions to consider. For one, the Supreme Court decision will delay even more the proclamation of winning party-list groups, those that were able to garner at least 2 percent of the total votes cast for the party list. While the Comelec, whose leadership is even now riven by divided loyalties and agenda, takes its sweet time deciding which among the accredited party-list groups should be disaccredited, the seats meant for party-list representatives will remain empty.

How long will the Comelec take to act on the Supreme Court's directive? One month? Six months? A year? And what impact will this decision have on both winning and losing party-list groups? If, for example, the Lakas-NUCD, which was able to gain entry to Congress as a party-list group, loses its accreditation on the ground that as a political party it does not represent the "marginalized and under-represented," what happens to its votes? Will these votes be nullified, too? On one hand, this may sound like good news to the party-list groups, many of them genuine, which failed to win enough votes to bring them to Congress. If enough votes are nullified, it just might lower the 2 percent threshold, making it possible for other party-list groups to gain a seat. On the other hand, wouldn't nullification of votes for some groups effectively disenfranchise many voters? How will these voters feel about the party-list system, if ever?

* * *

AS the cliché goes, the ball is now in the Comelec's court. If it's unable to pull its act together and give the highest priority to the matter of party-list accreditation, then the winning party-list groups face an eternity in limbo. But if it gives preference to convenience and bows to political pressure, then it could very well leave the well-intentioned party-list provision under the absurd situation of contradicting the very spirit in which it was crafted and ratified.

Worse than the delay in the proclamation, is the problem of maintaining the belief of the country's poor in the meaning and substance of the law. Here is a law, based on a constitutional provision, that promised a voice to the voiceless, and a measure of power to the powerless. But because of the way politicians interpreted it, and bureaucrats bungled its implementation, it has become a parody of itself.

Because they've lost two elections in a row, many party-list groups, some of them representing truly marginalized groups like the disabled, the elderly, the indigenous cultural communities, have already lost the right to participate in future elections. Of course, they can always reorganize under a new name and leadership. But what does this tell them about how our politics is skewed hopelessly toward the already-rich and the already-powerful?

* * *

SO as the joke goes, there's good news and there's bad news about the Supreme Court's latest decision. I just wish the high tribunal had decided on this legal question before the elections, so we wouldn't be facing all these difficult dilemmas at the moment. As it is, disqualifying certain party-list groups and voiding the votes they won, is like squeezing toothpaste back into the tube. There may be good reason for the mess, but you may have to wonder if it's all worth it.

Early poll on divorce

LOOKING BACK

Ambeth R. Ocampo

IN AN ERA without Mahar Mangahas and the Social Weather Stations, the prewar Free Press was a barometer of public opinion. Data came in by snail mail from all parts of the Philippines where the Free Press was read, and while sampling is not as sophisticated as it is today, it was an expression of the temper of the times. In 1927, the Free Press asked about divorce and encouraged response by offering prizes for the best opinions that accompanied a vote either for or against divorce.

Over 6,500 votes were cast from November 1926 to the press deadline for the first issue of 1927. All provinces in the Philippines seemed to be represented except Batanes where issues of the Free Press were a bit difficult to get on a regular basis. While 5,000 readers voted against divorce, that overwhelming number was from people who were not in favor of easy divorce. This makes me wonder if the votes would have turned out differently if the issue was presented more clearly. One should also note that over 2,000 women took part in the opinion poll and of this number, 300 were in favor of a *liberalized* divorce law, whatever that is.

The figures are as follows: in favor of divorce, 1,546 votes (1,235 votes from men and 311 from women); those against divorce, 5,001 votes (3,286 votes from men and 1,715 from women). Total votes: 6,547. Not much here for analysis because we do not have access to the comments that came with the votes, but the first prize for best opinion on divorce went to Ms Agatona Constantino of Legazpi City who was photographed holding her first child. She won P100—a huge sum in those days—for saying, "No, [I am not in favor of divorce because] the wife is not a flower that a man drops because it has lost its beauty and sweetness for him."

Second prize with P50 went to Francisco Perez of Santa Maria, Bulacan who was not in favor of divorce either. He said, "No, we do not want negotiable wives!" Then there were five consolation prizes of P10 each: Beatriz Lagasca from Ilocos Sur won for stating: "No, because in that case we would be equal to the four-legged animals who are free to go as they please." Fortunato de Veyra from Paco, Manila voted for divorce: "Yes, once concubinage is a fact, court or no court conviction, the sanctity of the home has been violated." I wonder if he was speaking from experience—perhaps even vicarious experience. Flora Dagdayan from Bayambang, Pangasinan said: "No, when women lose faith in men, and men lose faith in God then I vote for the divorce law." Carmen Salac from Candaba, Pampanga said: "No, if the present law fails to stop man and woman from the evil of polygamy, could a liberalized one do better?" Last but not the least, Vicente Roco of Sta. Barbara, Iloilo: "Yes, divorce is a bankruptcy proceeding; we do not imprison people for debt, why punish them for lost affection?"

Being a predominantly Catholic (or should we say Christian) country, it was natural that many people would vote against divorce, even in a magazine poll, citing the line, "What God has joined together let no man put asunder." Thus, it was refreshing to read a married Igorot from Benguet saying something rather vague: "What there God hath...is not meant for a love-less, God-less pair." Some young people who participated in the polls justified their vote for divorce by saying there was parental pressure in the choice of one's partner.

How did the editors choose the winners for the best opinions? A sure winner for me would have been the one sent in by a reader from Naga who said, "If you want a second-hand wife, make divorce easy." Perhaps this entry was short and flippant but for me it beats that corny first-prize winner from the delicate flower of Legazpi. A woman from Tarlac threatened fire and brimstone by warning readers that, "An easy divorce law shuts the door of the jail, but opens the wide gateway to hell." More down to earth was a reader from Zamboanga who had very practical concerns: "Make divorce easy and within a week we will have to increase our courts one hundred percent and in another week we will have to build more prisons." While media have carried opinion polls on various issues and topics, most of the time we are left with cold numbers for and against and do not get a sampling of the opinions that truly give the temper of the times.

* * *

In my last column on the 1926 Free Press poll on male beauty contests, I ran out of space and could not print these relevant quotes. Delfino Santiago of UP: "Certainly, there must also be a beauty contest for men. If America is proud of her Valentinos, undoubtedly we are also proud of our handsome men. Bring them into the light and give our young ladies an opportunity to submit pictures of their *guapos*." Hipolito Castillo of Silay: "Beauty is not confined only to those of the fair sex, therefore it would be unjust and unfair if we were to deny our brothers the joy of being honored by a public recognition as a handsome man." Gabina Carpio of Bacolor, Pampanga: "It will tend to make our men effeminate. It is not beauty or effeminacy that should make us proud of our men, but virile qualities of mind and body."

* * *

Comments are welcome at ambeth@admu.edu.ph

Taiwanese poachers threaten Ivatan fisherfolk

COMMENTARY

Bernardo V. Lopez

TAIWAN fishing vessels are notorious worldwide for poaching and destroying the resources of other countries. In Argentina, they taunt with their high-speed vessels the local coast guard who chase them for hundreds of kilometers in the open seas in frustration.

When angry Australians could not stop them from desecrating the Great Barrier Reef, largest in the world, they resorted to burning and sinking three vessels. The Taiwanese got scared and stopped. But after a few years, they came back, hiring Indonesian sailors to risk a bullet for them. They were now simply "financiers" of environmental crimes.

If the notorious Taiwanese vessels can wreak havoc across the globe, what more in their own backyard, the Batanes islands, home of the ancient boat people called Ivatans. Last June 4 to 16, the Unesco conducted in Basco a workshop on conservation of the "Batanes archipelago and Ivatan archaeological landscape." This was in line with the Unesco's nomination of Batanes as a World Heritage Site.

In that workshop, local Ivatans reported the grim details of a virtual massacre of an ancient people by ruthless poachers. The "massacre" is simple, denying the Ivatans of their main source of traditional livelihood by killing the seas. At the Unesco workshop, Rolando Cabitao, an Ivatan ATO officer, gave a report which shocked everyone. Here are some details in his report.

The Taiwanese use the latest "sophisticated" gear, computer-aided fish-seeking sonars, long-line nets, dynamite, sodium cyanide and even plain electricity. Although they are more aggressive when the seas are rough and no small local boats dare venture out to sea, they operate year round. There was a time a staggering convoy of 34 Taiwanese vessels was seen in municipal waters, bringing memories of Limahong's Armada of junks at the Lingayen Gulf which scared the Spaniards.

But why are they so brave as to enter municipal waters? Reelected Batanes Gov. Vicente Gato explains how even local government is sometimes helpless to stop the Taiwanese. Gato reports that when the Coast Guard detained a group of 17 vessels caught between Ivana and Sabtang, their export papers suddenly appeared but only a few days after apprehension, hinting of connections in high places. Not even a governor could dispute these papers in court unless they are proven to be antedated, which they could not.

It turned out, said Cabitao, the 17 vessels were confronted by the Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources (BFAR) in Bicol for similar crimes. BFAR Assistant Regional Director Ambrosio Conloc showed photocopies of DA papers of payments, not of licenses. They reportedly changed their corporate name from Marco Fishing Ventures to Luzon Aquatic Resources and started operating in Batanes.

The scary thing is these guys are so powerful and rich, they can buy anyone. They buy officials of the BFAR, Coast Guard, PNP, Bureau of Immigration and Deportation (BID), and even Ivatans who become traitors to their own kind, Cabitao reports. In one case, they succeeded in transferring the court case from Basco to Aparri where the judge has no decision until now. They were even escorted to Aparri by an ex-policeman who said his chief ordered him to do so.

A source from the Basco RTC reports that there are now "less than 10" cases pending against Taiwanese fishers, some as old as two to seven years. Less than one percent are convicted. Others are fined a miserly P1,000 when they have destroyed millions of pesos of reef resources. The fine for illegal fishing for foreigners is a minimum of $1,000 or P50,000. But the penalty becomes "light" if they plead guilty provided the fiscal agrees. Guess why a fiscal would agree. Also, they change the charge from "illegal fishing" to "illegal entry," which has minimal penalty.

The RTC source reports that a total bail for seven Taiwanese of P350,000 was quickly paid. They disappeared instantly. This money is small change for the rich Taiwanese fishermen. Their vessel was burnt mysteriously later. But still, the Taiwanese keep coming back because they know how much they can earn in a single illegal fishing trip. Even if we take the "Australian option," we are not sure we can stop the Taiwanese. They take any risk for windfall profits.

A certain SPO4 Garcia was accused during the Unesco conference of escorting the Taiwanese. When the PNP official at the conference could not give a credible answer, Rep. Butch Abad immediately ordered an investigation. Once, when the governor ordered the Coast Guard not to release a vessel, a company representative, Boy Llamo, came, accompanied by a certain Lieutenant Ibanez of the Coast Guard, who had it immediately transferred to their custody.

Ivatans are paid P16,000 a week "salary" to work for the Taiwanese, the conference reported. Local fishermen are paid P400 a day, says Cabitao, to work in Taiwanese vessels. There was however an unconfirmed report that such workers died in mysterious circumstance in the open seas.

Unesco officials say its conservation efforts can perhaps get international pressure on the Taiwanese to control their notorious fishing vessels. That is a welcome move. But still, there is no assurance this can stop them. Governor Gato reports that of five vessels detained three have been destroyed by powerful typhoon waves—justice meted out by Nature in revenge. The more meta-legal "Australian option" may work but only for a time.

The "massacre" of Ivatans consists of the dwindling catch from subsistence fishing of 10 to 2 kilos a day which translates into malnourished children in the thousands. The 20 kilos of lobster per trip has dwindled to 4 kilos because chemicals have destroyed their habitat permanently. The crime is so appalling, yet traitors abound and the Taiwanese can buy anyone in high or low places, and move at will to destroy in a few years what took Nature a million to build.

There is only one way to stop the Taiwanese "invasion." The challenge is for the Ivatans to stand together and neutralize the traitors in their midst. That is the only way, people power or Ivatan power. Nothing else will work.

THEY SAID

No ransom truly

"A no-ransom policy should not only mean 'no ransom being paid by the government,' it should mean 'no ransom being paid by anyone.'"

—Sen. Rodolfo Biazon on reports of ransom being paid by families of the Abu Sayyaf hostages

What they need, not want

"Give them what they need, not what they want, because they will always have problems, and they will always want more."

—Private schools association head Eleazar Kasilag's appeal to Education Secretary Raul Roco not to "spoil" public school teachers

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Review of ROTC program in progress

THE WALKOUT of Reserve Officers Training Corps cadets at the University of Santo Tomas last June 24 exemplifies our youth's propensity to be easily persuaded by some leftist front organizations to resort to protest actions without thoroughly understanding these groups' real motives. That walkout only makes us more determined in pushing for the continuance of the ROTC program, which aims to build character, instill discipline and cultivate a conviction to serve among our youth.

The protest action, which was spearheaded by leftist student groups, such as the League of Filipino Students, Anakbayan and the Student Christian Movement, all known front organizations of the National Democratic Front, obviously had a deeper motive than merely dramatizing their call for justice in the slaying of UST ROTC cadet Mark Welson Chua. We will recall that weeks after Chua's death, several groups started calling for the dropping of the ROTC program from the university curricula, because of the alleged prevalence of graft and corruption in the program. This is very convenient for these leftist student groups because once they succeed, then they can put in place their own program of indoctrinating our students with their ideology. If we were to abolish the ROTC program, we would be allowing our schools to be infiltrated and eventually plagued by leftist thinking.

I don't think that any parent would want to see their children going to an institution of higher learning where the only lesson they will imbibe is contrary to our democratic way of life. In the same manner, no member of an academic community would subscribe to myopic, ideological thinking and allow discord to reign in an institution that seeks to mold the youth into responsible, competent and learned professionals. Let the ROTC program remain, for otherwise we will lose the fight by default.

The ROTC program should not be abolished on account of the issues besetting our ranks. If we did that, we would not really rectify the problem, but only allow these problems to mutate or make them worse.

We agree that there really is an urgent need to reexamine the entire program. The Armed Forces of the Philippines, particularly the Army, is coming up with a revitalized ROTC program, to be able to keep in step with the times. We are continuously seeking ways and means by which we can improve the program and address the issues besetting the system. Definitely, the abolition of the ROTC program is not among the solutions to the current dilemma.—**LT. COL. JOSE Z. MABANTA, INF (GSC) PA, chief public affairs, Office of the Army Chief Public Affairs, Fort Andres Bonifacio, Makati City**

Traffic monster rising in Bicutan

JUST when national attention is riveted on the Abu Sayyaf bandits, a traffic monster is rising full blast at the Bicutan-Parañaque South Expressway exit to bring greater havoc to a place partially decongested by the Skyway solution. It's one more of those SM malls taking advantage of the dense population of the area. It's located right at the toll exit of Bicutan. What is ironic is that the government has spent billions of pesos constructing the Skyway to ease the traffic going south of Metro Manila. Now you know the real reason why the Bicutan Skyway Exit deliberately avoided the big piece of land at the exit, curving its way around what will be another monstrous mall. Worse, Parañaque City under the leadership of Mayor Joey Marquez, permitted the construction, knowing quite well that traffic in the area has gone from bad to worse.

If at this time people experience heavy traffic at the Filinvest-Alabang area, apparently due to the huge shopping centers located in Alabang, what more for a mall that is located right at the exit of Bicutan?

I hope that the INQUIRER and GMA-7 get to gather more information and news about this issue. It is a major national concern because it's about people's money (the Skyway) being wasted again.—**RINGO MORELLA, ringomorella@yahoo.com, Parañaque City**

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MMDA ADVISORY
June 29, 2001

Pursuant to the implementation of the Metropolitan Manila Development Authority of its Waste Segregation Scheme, listed below are the accredited buyers of recyclable materials. Barangays, homeowners associations and individual households with substantial quantities of recyclables are advised to get in touch with the accredited recyclable materials buyer nearest their locality for proper disposition of their recyclables. ***Remember, segregated waste can be converted into a resource.***

DIRECTORY OF RECYCLING COMPANIES
As of MAY 2001

TYPE OF WASTE	NAME OF COMPANY	CONTACT PERSON	ADDRESS	TELEPHONE/FAX NUMBER(s)
PLASTIC	Plastic Industry	Ms Ellain Reyes	7 P.Santiago St. Canumay, Valenzuela MM	Tel 292-7831 / 292-1185
	Adventure Mfg Corp.	Mr Genaro Chua	77 D Pablo St., Karuhatan Valenzuela	292 0550
	Asia Plas Industries Corp.	Ms Beth Ong / Mr Jojo Ng	12-E 8th Ave. cor 6th, Kaloocan City MM	Telefax 363-8832
	PEMA Plastic Mfg. Corp.	Ms Marcelena Ong	60 Mendez Rd Baesa Q.C	Tel. 363-4593 / 361-2844
	Hi-Top Pelletize Products	Mr Ting Hok	3-S Cabral Near 67 Maysan Rd., Valenzuela	Fax 292-9003
	Hopewell Polyindustries	Ellen Go	10 Balubaran Valenzuela	
	Polystyrene Packaging Council of the Phil	Mr. Tony Chiong	PPCP Secretariat 900 1 Victoria Bldg 429 UN Ave.	Tel. 522-0860 / 526-0889 Fax 522-4354
	Interpolymer Corporation	Alex Go	Malabo-Maysan, Valenzuela	Tel 292 4878 Fax 292-7726
	Pacific Plastic Corp.	Elsie David	6 T. Santiago, Valenzuela	Tel 292 7831 to 34 Fax 292 7840
	Paramount Vinyl products Corp.	Wilson Ong	56 G. de Jesus Bo. Bario Cal City	Tel. 361-66-52/54
	Phelps dodge Phils Inc.	Frank Camacho	2 Pioneer St. Mandaluyong City	
	Polyhome Industries	Clara Jim	16 Isidro Francisco St. Maysan Rd., Val.	Tel 292-8111 Fx 292-8115
	Ployland manufacturers	Romy Ang	Bo. Balubaran, Valenzuela	Res 292 4988 Fx 292-1906
	EJK Plastic Industries Corp.	Jeremy Chan	275 8th Avenue, Kaloocan City	Tel. 362-3415 Fx 362-3240
	Exact Plastic Services Co. Inc.		45 Malasimbo St. Frisco, Q.C	
	GBC Corporation	LM Panganiban	E Rodriguez Jr Ave., Libis, Q.C	
	Imperial Mfg Co Inc.		39 N Domingo Q.C.	
	Imperial Mfg Co. Inc.		14 Tuayan Q.C.	Tel. 712-2801
	Jacinto Universal Technology Corp.	Luis Avancena	Alvarado St. Legaspi Vill., Makati City	
	Manila Plastic Products		36 Gov Pascual Avenue, Malabon	Tel. 361-2691 Fax 361-3380
	TKU Francisco Commercial	Tan Key Uy	SM Centerpoint Complex	
(including grocery bags & candy wrappers)	H. Ramos Mfg. Corp.	Mr. Chuping Tejeda / Mr H Ramos	4/F PROC Bldg 767 McArthur Highway Karuhatan, Valenzuela, MM	Tel. 359-806/ 361-8358/571-238 Fax 359-806
(all kinds of hard plastics, plastic cups)	Metal Wealth Ent.	Betty Sy	378 Gen. Luis St., Bgy Capri Novaliches, QC	
(plastic cups & hard plastics)	Cunanan Ent.	Mr. Romualdo Cunanan, Jr. Coun. Ben Galauran	93 Dona Victoria, Malabon MM	Tel. 288-0334
STYROFOAM		Ms. Margo Centeno	109 Los Baños, Laguna	Tel (049)50-06
	Polystyrene Packaging Council of the Phil.	Mr Tony Chiong	PPCP Secretariat 900-1 Victoria Bldg 429 UN Ave.	Tel 522-0660 / 526-0889 Fax 522 4354
	Chemrez Inc	Romeo Tan	65 Calle Industria, Bagumbayan, QC	Tel 635 0680 Fax 635-0703
	Daily Harvest Mercantile Ind Inc.	Joseph Sia	21 Railroad St., Port Area Manila	Tel. 527-4024 Fax 527-4022
	DOW Chemical Pacific, LTD.	Bobby Batungbakal	73/F, 6750 Ayala Ave. Makati City	Tel 810-1986 Fax 815 21-80
	Ever Fortune Thermoplas Corp.	Carlos Sy	42 Sto. Domingo St. Q.C	Tel. 732-1291 Fax 711-0168
	Fompac Plastics Corp.	Alberto Tanimco	10 Bigtang Awa Kalookan City	
	HE Mfg Corp	Moriano Ty	6037 Cul de sac, Paranaque	
	Philippine Petrochemical Product Inc.	Marilou Rivera	Salcedo Village	Tel 892-3071 Fax 818-24-36
	Plastech Industrial Corp.	William Ong	Meycauayan Industrial Subd.	Tel 241 7301 to 05 Fx 242-09-69
	Polytex Ind Inc	Ben Yu	49 Panaliuan, Q.C	Tel 34-7176
	Q.C. Styropackaging Corp.	William Chua	1200 H EDSA Q.C	Tel. 99 5002
	Synchromark Trading Corp.	Tony Chiong	Ermita Manila	Tel 526 0809 Fax 522 5354
	Styrotech Corp.	Lim Hwa Sing	B P Jacinto St Bagbaguin Kalookan City	Tel 292 5438 Fax 292 9003
	Vassar Industries Inc	Richard Chua	7272 Malugay St. Makati City	Tel. 892 3991 Fax 817 4949
PACKAGING PRODUCTS	San Miguel Packaging Products	Mr Abner Villahermosa		Tel 803 8064 /75 Fax 893-5774
PET PLASTICS (softdrink, mineral water, cooking oils, facial cleanser, etc.	Valenzuela Pelletized Plastic Products, Co	Mr. Choi Siukam	10 Isidro Francisco St Maysan Rd., Valenzuela Metro Manila	Tel (02)292-5024 Fax (02) 292-0695
	Manulas Ind'l. Corp	Mr Wilson Fung/ Mr Michael Mancilla	141 McArthur H-way, Marulas, Valenzuela	Tel. 291 8105 to 07 Fax 291-60-30
	Mapol Merchandising & Trading	Ms. Maria F. Apolinisima	Pound cor., Shekels St., Cainta, Greenpark Vill., Cainta Rizal	Tel (02)681 13307 (0915)808-9289 Fax (0915)700-3446/47
	Coca Cola Bottling Phils. Inc.	Mr Leonides Valencia	Herrera St. Makati City, MM	Fax 894 3962
	FilPET, Inc.	Ms Carmencita Abelardo	Maysilo, Malabon	Tel. 373-9797 Fax 371-9781
	San Miguel Packaging Product	Mr Benjamin Gregorio/ Mr Ullysess Jesus		Tel 632-320 Fax 6373167
	MultiPET	Mr Wilfredo Go		Tel 292-4011/293-2949/277-8803
	TCCEC	Mr Lito Pinlac		Fax 849 8286 ; 8289
	Rowell Plastic	Mr Antonio Azarcon		Tel 637-0987 Fax 437 32-03
	FylSan Corp.	Mr Enrique Mallari		Tel 815 9319 Fax 818-41-23
	Star Packaging	Mr Richard Chong		Tel. 643-4204
PAPER	ACLEM	Mr Hans Lim	3501 Juan Luna St., Binondo, Manila	Tel. 242 07 69
	Paperland Industrial Corp.	Ms. Johanna Tan	Leland Drive, Balintawak, Q.C	Tel 361 8531 Fx 362-3607
	Casan Paper		25 21st Avenue, Quezon City	Tel. 921-0237
	Carpel Trading	Mr Bong Teves	Lot B, Emerald St. East Fairview Park, Q.C	
	Manila Paper Mills	Mr Boy Tecson	Bo. Sangandaan, Quirino Highway Quezon City	Tel 905 159/90-1691 Fax 90 1420 Cphone # 0912 8045157
	Globe Paper Mills	Mr Oliver Yu Mr William Eng	1000 Gov E. Pascual Ave., Malabon, Metro Manila	Tel. 361 2516 to 18
	Trust Int'l. Paper Corp. (TIPCO)	Mr. Rolando D. Peña	Office Address 2F, ACE Bldg., 101 Rada cor Dela Rosa St Legaspi Village Makati City Plant - Bgy. Bundagul, Mabalacat, Pampanga	Tel. 892 9781 to 06 local 342 Fax 815-8460
	United Pulp & Paper	Ms Lea Abdum/	166 Salcedo St. Makati City	Tel. 819-9526/817-2411
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	Hansson Paper Corp	Mr George So	RFM Compound Bo. Manggahan, Pasig City	Tel. 646-2160 Fax 646-2160
	Holland Pacific Paper Inc.	Mr. Renato Domingo	226 Quirino H-way Quezon City	
	Liberty Paper		151 Paso de Blas, Valenzuela	
	Paper City Corp.	Mr Kenberd Syiaco	140 A. Mariano, Malinta	
	WorldWide Paper Mills	Mr Rogelio Sarmiento	Meralco Rd., Bo. Sucat, Muntinlupa	
	PICOP	Mr. Freddie Agregado	Center Point, Ortigas Center	Tel. 816-7161
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	Standard Corrugated Box Inc.	Mr. Chan Fu Puk	MGM Compound Quezon City	Tel. 983-00-18
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	Goodwill Metal Ent.		667 A. Bonifacio Rd. Q.C.	Tel 364-4169/362-1327&24
	Amalgamated Iron Works		97 Pablo dela Cruz St., San Bartolome Q.C.	Tel 902 636
	Biosah Marketing	Mr Anton Lim	3001 J Abad Santos St. cor Morong, Manila	Tel. 209-133
ALUMINUM	Atlanta Aluminum	Mr Philip Chua	1128 Quirino H-way, Quezon City	Tel 939-1384
	Hilton Mfg Corp	Mr Robert Yu		Tel. 292 8134
	Kawashima Phils. Inc.	Mr Julius Chavez	2/F Rodman Bldg., Taguig MM	
ALUMINUM CANS	Reynolds Phils. Corp.	Mr Jaime Y. Gonzales Atty George C. Molina	2/F FENICS Bldg. 5 Avecado Rd FTI Complex, Taguig, MM	Tel 812-4071/838-8383 & 8973 Tel 402 0481 to 85 loc. 61 Fax 838 6862
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	MIRDC DOST	Engr R Vilona	Bicutan, Taguig, MM	Tel. 837 0431 to 38, Fax 838-7878
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	Pacific Glass Co.		Sheridan St. Mandaluyong, MM	Tel. 631-0221 Fax 631-22-15
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	Republic Asahi Glass Co.	Mr Bienvenido Cruz		Tel 641-9181 to 87
	Glass Factory	Mr Willy Reyes/ Mr Roy Santos		Tel. 632-3091
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	Alliance Foundry Shop & Eng. Inc.	Mr. Martin Sy	135 J. Teodoro St., Corner 10th & 11th Ave. Kaloocan City	Tel 361 1073 Fax 362 0039
	Cathay Pacific Steel Corporation	Antonio Arrobio	P. Dela Cruz, QC	Tel. 633 8033; Fax 633-8048
	City Foundry	Ariel Amenda	8th Ave., Grace Park, Kaloocan City	Tel. 364-5910
	Gold Star Foundry	Alex Ang	271 J. Teodoro St Kaloocan City	Tel 293-2607 Fax 361-1340
	Gold Star Steel Corporation	Johnny Sy	215 J. Teodoro St., between 6th & 7th Ave. Kaloocan City	Tel. 361-1337; Fax 367-4582
	Island Foundry & Machine Shop	Jose Joson	27 A Del Mundo St., 5th Ave.Kaloocan City	Tel 358-776 Fax 358-826
	Kim Bee Foundry	Esther Sy	9th Ave. Kaloocan City	Tel 361-1173 Fax 361-1175
	Kim Hoc Hing Foundry Corp.	Kim Hoc	319 Jaboneros St., Binondo Manila	Tel 243-0647
	Kim Yek Engineering & Foundry Co.	Lai Sy	527 Camba St., Binondo, Manila	Tel 242 3047; Fax 242-3052
	National Steel Corp	Aida Manalac	Makati City	Tel 805-0333
	New Asia Foundry & Mfg. Co. Inc.	Danny Sy	272 Rizal Ave., Ext., Kaloocan City	Tel. 365-8784 Fax 364-3785
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	Royal Metal	c/o Mill	100 4th Ave. Caloocan City	Tel. 361 6307
	United Metal Smelting & Mfg. Corp.	Celia Lao	76 Balong-bato Quezon City	Tel 364-5448/361-9974/343-781
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		Roberto Guevarra	Bgy. Chairman, Barangay Sun Valley, Parañaque, MM	Tel. 823-0230

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	Estor Romero	873-1954 / 543-1090	12 Chico St., Verdant Subd., Pamplona, LP
Makati	Myrna Manalo	844-9525 / 844-0118	2206 Marconi St., Makati City
	Maria Naypes	895-4901/895-47-24	0881 Sampaloc St. Bgy. San Antonio VII, Mkt.
Malabon	Helen Sia	440 1777	117 MH Del Pilar St., Tugatog, Malabon
Mandaluyong	Rexie Constantino	531-0791, Fax - 531-2118	16 Libertad St., Mandaluyong City
	Sulpicio Sabino	717-1465 / 532-7949	763 Boni Avenue, Mandaluyong City
Manila	Aurora Cirera	525-7352 / 526-5137	1693 Ma. Orosa St., Malate, Manila
Marikina	Josephine Fremista	Cell # 0912-3573967	Farmers II, Tumana, Concepcion II, Marikina
	Delia Jimenez	941-1356 / Fax 892-6883	56 Millores, Twinville, Concepcion II, Marikina
Navotas	Nieves Gonzales	282-0220	Interior Champaca, J. Roldan, San Roque, Nav.
Parañaque	Carmencita "Baby" Velasco	825-6574/ Cell 0919-7840330	7205 A. Bonifacio St., San Dionisio, Piñque
Pasay	Raymundita Rapi	510-3437	39 Berne St., Pasay City
Pasig	Alexander Arreola	631-4361/ 633-3509	114 Buruan St., Pineda, Pasig
		671-7330	75 JP Rizal St., Bagong Ilog, Pasig
Quezon City	Paul Ticzado, Jr.	431-2133 / 410-0210	Area 2, Sitio Talanay, Batasan Hills, QC
San Juan	Igmedio Tambong	744-0993 / 724-8542 Cell # 0918 8031770	11-C Dungo St., San Juan
Taguig	Bayani Evangelista	544-3491 / 838-8346	304 Balagtas St. Lower Bicutan, Tagig

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Climbing mountains

THERE'S THE RUB

Conrado de Quiros

IT is the weekend, we leave Quito early in the morning and ride a bus to a town named Otazabal, a couple of hours away. It is populated largely by Indians, and its current mayor is an Indian, the first Indian to be voted in the province. Going there is like passing by Kennon, except that the mountains are worlds bigger—the road is lined by granitic rock, as far as the eye can see—and the trees are so much taller. The air is also so much colder.

As soon as we get off the bus, we start trekking. We are told we are going to some kind of cleansing ceremony the Indians perform during the summer solstice. We are also told it is only a short distance away, but as it turns out their concept of short is like the concept of short of farmers in the Philippines. It is a half-hour's walk uphill. We end up in a very high place, where a small solitary tree with low branches grows on an elevated piece of ground. The ground is considered sacred and you are allowed to stand on it only on bare feet. The tree is supposed to be the incarnation of an old chief who died of a broken heart.

I take my shoes off and take part in a cleansing ceremony. I remember seeing a feature on CNN a couple of days before about the English trekking to Stonehenge to celebrate the summer solstice. Druids also performed some ancient ritual there. When it is my turn, I stand in front of an Indian, who waves a bough over me and makes a sign of the cross on me several times. He then takes a swig from a bottle, gargles the liquid in his mouth, and spits it at me in the form of a cross. He sprays the liquid at me front and back, taking swigs from the bottle again and again. The smell isn't bad, even though a spray of it falls squarely on my face. It's like the liquid they use in barbershops, a combination of alcohol and herbs. After that he waves the bough at me again and then swishes it in the air, as though to suggest that he is sending the bad spirits inside me away.

After that, I go down, sit on a piece of wood and look at the never-ending mountains that surround a placid lake. Someone comes over to me and asks jokingly if the ritual has made me mystical. I say, no, it has made me tired. He asks what I think of it, and I say we have similar things in the Philippines, along with faith healers. He asks me if I believe in these things, and I say that being a journalist makes me look askance at a great many things but that I am not knocking them. At the very least, I say, the ritual says something invaluable about respecting earth and sky, or establishing harmonious, and not confrontational, relations with Nature. At the very most, I say, why not go through it, you've got nothing to lose but—your evil spirits.

We next trek to higher ground for another half hour, where the Indians again sing incantations to the wind. That doesn't take long, and soon it is time to visit a waterfall, which is supposed to have magical qualities, made especially potent at this time of year.

That is the harrowing part. The way to it is down the mountain, which is breathtakingly steep—it must be a 45-degree incline, probably more. At several points, you can see what is down below from an almost vertical angle. Where there are paths going down, they are dusty, which makes them slippery. Obviously, it has not occurred to the Indians who have planned this (our Quito hosts are themselves taken by surprise) that someone may actually slip and break his neck while rolling down the mountain. That possibility is there literally at every turn.

I have just been walking uphill and am very tired, but now my adrenaline starts pumping: The survival hormone, it's been called, and I begin to appreciate the description in a new light. I keep telling myself—in Tagalog—that whoever thought of this ought to be shot. The climb down is no problem for the younger people but has the more ancient ones like me panting and breathing hard. At several points I have to be helped by men and women. I am almost crawling halfway down. By then also, the blisters on my feet are killing me. I decide to take off my shoes to be able to climb down better. It does help, but I have to deal with sharp stones and, worse, a ground that burns my feet. I debate on whether I should endure the blisters or the burning ground, and I choose the burning ground. At least I can rest in the portions that are shaded.

Since I am writing this, it is clear—applause from admirers, groans from detractors—that I have not fallen and broken my neck. I get down to the waterfall after an hour, barely able to walk. I move like someone who has been newly circumcised, which my boy was last summer. Lined in a row on a tall rock, the Indians are shouting and bowing before the waterfall. Their voices are lost in the roar of cascading water.

The younger and more energetic people splash on the water—ah, the blissful joys of youth!—while I sit on a log and get burned by the sun. I don't notice it because the wind is cold. People would be aghast when I get to Los Angeles days later and say I look like I have just crawled away from "The Mummy," skin peeling off my face. An hour later, we move to higher ground, a darkly shaded area full of tall trees. Thankfully, that is just five minutes away. There the Indians have laid out food on a mat, crisscrossed to form a cross. Largely beans, peanuts, corn, peas and pieces of meat that must have been veal. I am too tired to eat. And in any case, I am more thirsty than hungry. All the Indians have by way of quenching thirst is a drink called "chicha," made from sugar cane, which makes me even thirstier. After an hour, we walk over to where our buses are waiting. There are several vendors along the way. I buy water and gulp it down straight.

I fall into a deep sleep after a good bath—my pants are fit to be tossed into a fire—when we get back to where we are staying, and wake up three hours later in time for the night's repast. Wondrously, I feel light-headed and thoroughly rested. The cold makes my cheeks tingle. The meal is boisterous, everyone talking all at once. Afterward, people are asked to say something about how they have found the events of the last several days. When it is my turn, I say—the thought leaps up to my head, almost unbidden—that I will come away from Ecuador having learned one very important lesson in life. Namely, that it is so much harder to climb down a mountain than it is to climb up a mountain.

I will not bother to explain the context in which I say it. You can take from it what you will.

I don't know: Maybe the ritual about driving away evil spirits does work.

* * *

Comments are welcome at dequiros@vasia.com

The WORLD

LUVERNE B. GUECO, Editor

EXILED DOCTOR'S CLAIM

China butchering executed criminals for organs trade

WASHINGTON—A Chinese burn doctor seeking asylum in the United States told Congress harrowing tales Wednesday of his work removing the skin of nearly 100 executed prisoners for transplant.

Wang Guoqi's account added weight to widespread reports of involuntary organ donations.

He said he routinely jumped into action immediately after prisoners were executed. First, he cut off the ropes that bound their hands. Then he removed their clothes before spending 10 minutes to 20 minutes on his real job—carefully slicing off their skin.

In October 1995, however, there was an execution that "has tortured my conscience to no end," Wang told the House International Relations Committee's human rights panel.

The prisoner in Hebei Province did not immediately die from the executioner's shot but was on the ground, convulsing, the 38-year-old doctor said.

Even after three other doctors "extracted his kidneys quickly and precisely," Wang said, the prisoner was still breathing, his heart still beating. Wang and a fellow burn surgeon stayed to harvest the skin but ultimately fled, fearing that people outside the ambulance were the man's angry relatives, preparing to attack.

"It is with deep regret and remorse for my actions that I stand here today testifying against the practices of organ and tissue sales from death row prisoners," said Wang, who came to the United States in April with a tour group.

Such organ harvesting is motivated by money, said human rights activist Harry Wu, imprisoned by China for 19 years. Executions of prisoners whose organs are deemed good matches for rich foreign transplant recipients—who pay more than $15,000 apiece—are scheduled to ensure the recipients are on hand.

Under an unwritten policy, Wu said, top priority recipients are high-ranking government and military officials, followed by wealthy overseas Chinese and other foreigners, then members of the military and finally, common citizens.

"Congress cannot allow this horrific situation to go unchallenged," said Rep. Ileana Ros-Lehtinen, head of the panel that held the hearing. She said she wants "to ensure that the US does not become an accomplice . . . in promoting this deplorable practice."

Rep. Cynthia McKinney of Georgia wondered whether the allegations were true.

"Is it possible we're having a whole lot of discussion about something that's not even going on?" she asked Michael Parmly of the State Department's human rights bureau.

Parmly said the evidence is "overwhelming and growing" and "the sources who have reported this are credible and numerous."

Dr. Thomas Diflo, director of kidney transplants at New York University Medical Center, said he got his first inkling of the situation three years ago when a patient who had been on their waiting list returned from a trip to China with a new kidney, saying vaguely it was from a distant cousin.

More recently, he has seen four or five more young Chinese-American patients in the same situation, some telling him their new organs came "from an executed prisoner."

Ros-Lehtinen has sponsored a bill to bar from the United States any physician from China who wants to come for training in organ or bodily tissue transplantation. . *AP*

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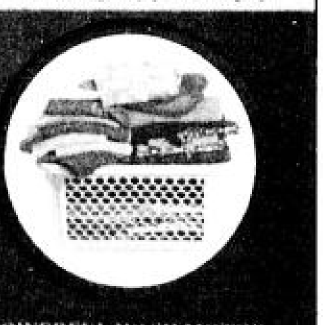

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Montesinos offers 30,000 videotapes of bribe-taking

LIMA, Peru—Vladimiro Montesinos, Peru's ex-spy chief who was rooted out from a Venezuelan hideout, offered to turn over some 30,000 potentially explosive videos to judges in exchange for favorable treatment, his lawyer confirmed Wednesday.

Montesinos, who has made a desperate bid to avoid transfer to Lima's maximum-security naval prison, made the comment casually Monday as he was introduced to the six anti-corruption judges who will sort out many charges against him, said Patricia Hurtado, his court-appointed lawyer.

Peru Monitor, a Lima-based English-language monthly newsletter, reported Wednesday that Montesinos—in handcuffs and wearing a bulletproof vest—said to anti-corruption Judge Magaly Basones, "Do you want to see more videos? I've got 30,000."

"There must be that amount, yes, he said that," Hurtado said. But the defense attorney said Montesinos was speaking "loosely," and that it was a "casual comment," not part of a formal court proceeding.

Peruvians are still reeling from the release of hundreds of videos covertly taped by Montesinos, showing him or his emissaries using bribes to obtain political favors from an array of election officials, lawmakers, military chiefs, businessmen and media heads.

The videos brought to light his role as the power broker behind former President Alberto Fujimori controlling the military, the police, the judiciary and other institutions.

Congress ousted Fujimori in November after he fled to Japan, his ancestral homeland, amid corruption scandals surrounding Montesinos, who fled Peru in October, eluding an eight-month international manhunt. *AP*

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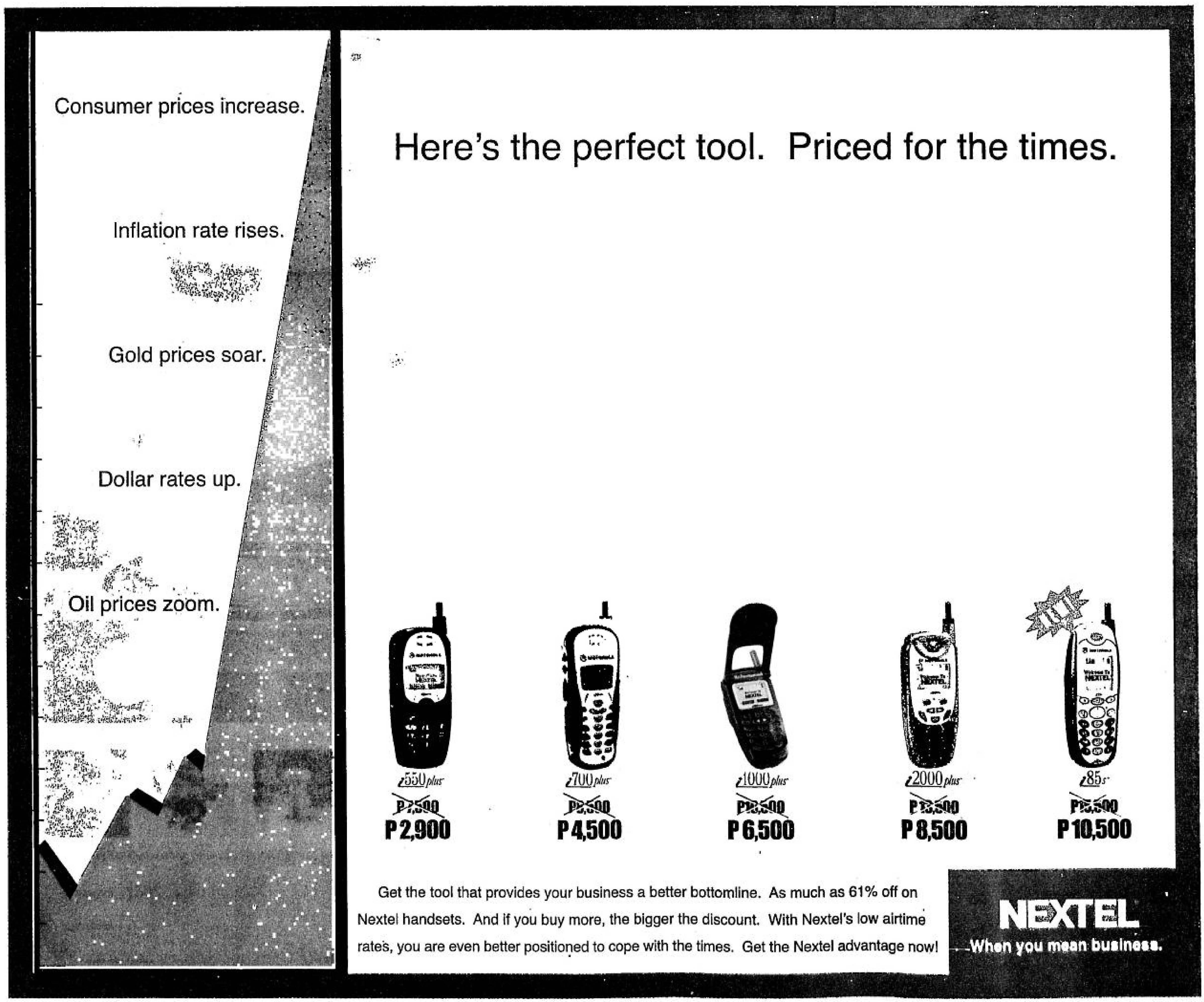
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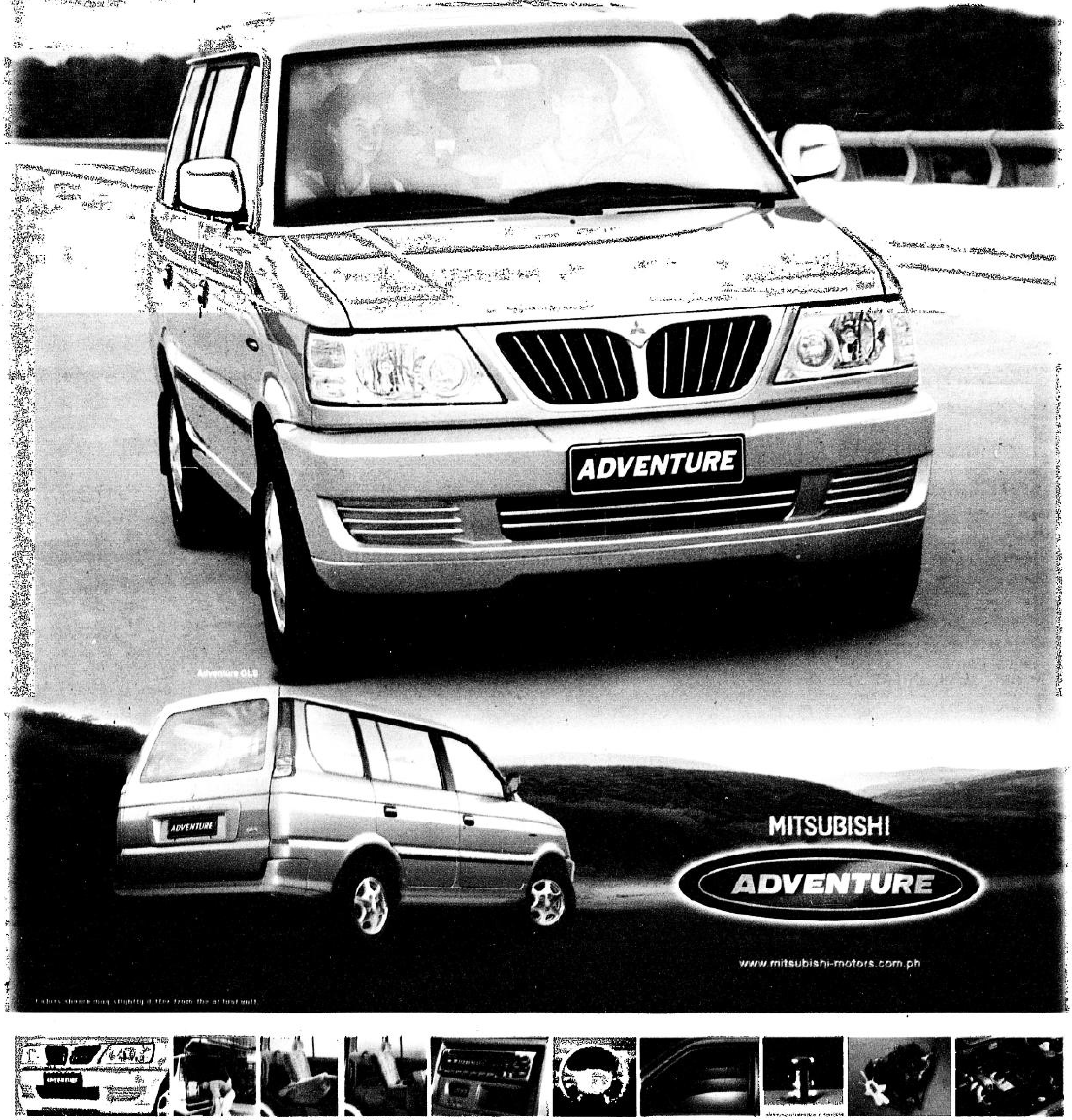
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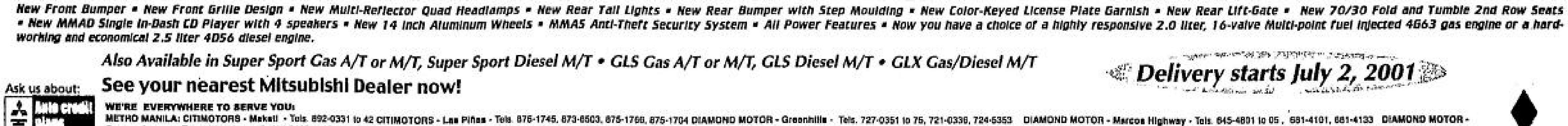

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MITSUBISHI MOTORS

A Message from the VRPMC President

INSPIRED by the De La Salle University Medical Center and Sister Francesca who headed their Quality Management Group, VRPMC started its ISO 9001 certification process.

We believe being ISO 9001-certified would significantly benefit our patients.

Now that VRPMC is ISO 9001-certified, you can be sure of our quality service, efficient employees, as well as standards-compliant systems.

We are committed to follow international standards that result to a higher level of service for our patients.

I am very proud to say that our unflinching hard work, unforgiving dedication, and the amount of heart put into the delivery of service to each and every patient of VRPMC paid off.

The streamlined and cost efficient ways developed through the 5s program and the ISO 9001 certification process allowed us to achieve our goal.

Yet our quest for service excellence does not end with the ISO 9001 certification.

We carry the responsibility to prove that we deserve the certification.

We will continue improving our services so that we can achieve another certification -- the certification that would come from satisfied, healthy and well cared for patients.

Thank you for your continued support and trust.

Irma P.E. Potenciano
MRS. IRMA P.E. POTENCIANO
President and Chairman of the Board

≅

Quality, Quality, Quality, Quality. This is the most important factor in any undertaking.

-- Dr. Conrado S. Dayrit
VRPMC Medical Director

≅

For us here at VRPMC, the ISO 9001 certification is a higher level of delivering quality service to our patients.

We know that we are paving the way for other healthcare institutions. We also know that from here on, our slogan of delivering "quality healthcare service with a heart" is not just going to be a slogan but will now become a commitment.

-- Mrs. Virma P. Vergel de Dios
VRPMC Hospital Administrator

VRPMC Now ISO 9001-Certified!

The first hospital in Metro Manila to receive the international distinction

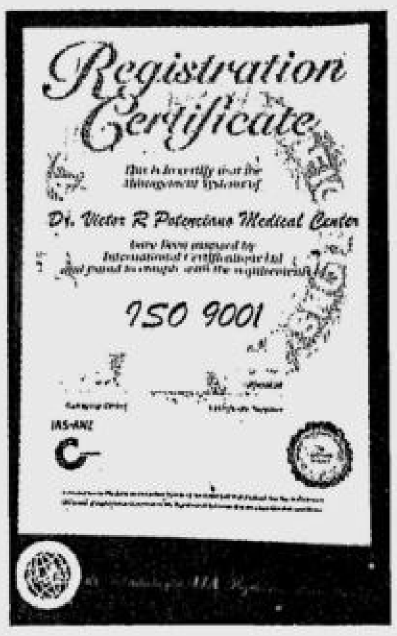
THE International Organization for Standardization (ISO) announced that the Dr. Victor R. Potenciano Medical Center (VRPMC) has recently achieved ISO 9001 certification, making it the first hospital in Metro Manila to achieve this international distinction.

ISO 9001 certification attests that VRPMC meets internationally-accepted standards of quality in its management and service procedures.

"We are very proud to be the first hospital in Metro Manila to be ISO 9001-certified, said Virma Vergel de Dios, VRPMC hospital administrator. "This is the highest level of assurance that we can give to our patients about the quality of our service."

Prior to VRPMC, the De La Salle University Medical Center in Dasmariñas, Cavite achieved the ISO 9001 certification.

VRPMC obtained the ISO 9001 certification after 11 months of re-engineering its various processes to meet the standards set by the international standards body.



Registration Certificate

Dr. Victor R Potenciano Medical Center

ISO 9001

JAS-ANZ

The management and staff of the hospital exerted their utmost efforts to document all of its business processes, and streamline its quality management procedures.

The Anglo Japanese American Registrars (AJA), an independent auditor, conducted thorough audit of the hospital's processes to confirm its compliance with global standards.

The ISO 9000 series of standards was developed by the International Organization for Standardization (ISO), a federation of national standards bodies from some 130 countries based in Geneva, Switzerland.

The ISO's primary function is to develop guidelines for effective management systems, which can serve as a framework for continuous improvement.

The ISO 9000 family represents a consensus on good management practices which is an accepted business standard in more than 90 countries.

The recent development about the certification is in line with the hospital's vision of continually improving the quality and delivery of health care services in the Philippines, stressed Mrs. Vergel De Dios.

She said VRPMC recognizes that customers are now generally more aware of the importance of the ISO.

"They are more discriminating. We have to keep up with the times. With the certification, they can be assured of world-class medical service," Mrs. Vergel de Dios said in a previous newspaper interview.

"When we first briefed management about getting our ISO 9001 certification last March 29, 2000, we knew that it would be an uphill climb because it would be something new for all of us," Dr. Tomas P. Maramba, VRPMC Quality Management Department Head said.

"Aside from the changes in the way we conduct our operations to conform to world-class standards, the acquisition of new equipment to replace or enhance our existing facilities proved to be a challenge as well."

Ms. Julita "Julie" Dayandayan, VRPMC's Quality Management Representative, added that it is not easy to undertake the certification process for ISO 9001 but management knew VRPMC had to earn it because they believed that our customers deserve to get the best in the hospital and health care industry.

Now that it has achieved the much-coveted certification Mrs. Vergel de Dios assured that VRPMC will not sit on its laurels.

Mrs. Vergel De Dios, Dr. Dayrit and Dr. Maramba

She said the hospital's plans to offer additional specialized medical services are already being achieved phase by phase.

VRPMC
DR. VICTOR R. POTENCIANO
MEDICAL CENTER
The Hospital that Cares

A new five-story building that would serve as the physician's center, and which is being constructed strategically in front of the present VRPMC, is almost complete.

The state-of-the-art facility would house all VRPMC doctors, De Dios explained. The ground floor of the new building would house the new emergency room and the facilities for occupational and physical therapy. The rooms that the doctors would vacate in the present building would be used as specialized centers.

Inculcating the 5S values

Work Values to Transform Routine Responsibilities into Extraordinary Customer Service

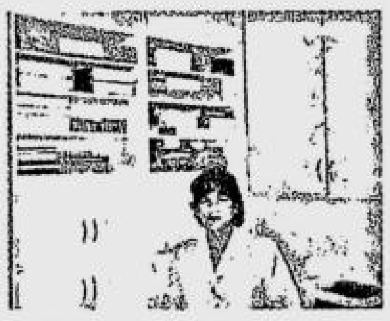
"WE were first introduced to the Japanese-inspired concepts of *Seiri, Seiso, Seiton, Seiketsu* and *Shitsuke* last year and we are glad that we have learned it," says a beaming member of the VRPMC staff in an interview.

We were initially confused about the concepts until after we learned that they also mean *sort, sweep / sanitize, systematized, standardized and self-discipline*, she added.

Staff and management work together

The young staff of VRPMC found out, together with the hospital's more than 400 personnel and medical staff, that those values could be easily remembered as 5S.

The 5S work values is a set of principles designed to improve an organization's operations.



5S model

When inculcated into the organization's culture, it can streamline its processes, improve health and safety, speed up and de-clog paperwork and lessen the need for a large inventory.

All these would result in, establishing a cost-effective system of operations.

"It was a necessary part of the ISO 9001 certification process," Dr. TomasP. Maramba, VRPMC Quality Management Department Head said.

He added that it is logical to implement the 5S hand in hand with the ISO 9001 standards because one prepares the way for the other.

It was hard at first because the staff had to go through the process of appreciating the benefits of 5S.

Encouraging them to continue implementing 5S, reminding them of their accomplishments and getting them to keep the momentum going came next, Dr. Maramba explained.

5S model

Staff implementing 5S

He pointed out that, eventually, the 5S will become an inseparable part of each staff.

It would not be unusual to see members of the VRPMC organization who would instinctively make the necessary adjustments in cases where they notice that the 5S values are not adhered to, Dr. Maramba said.

And the patients benefit immensely from all of these improvements in the organization, the Quality Management Head stated.

This is the true essence of our quality policy, he added.

Quality Policy

Dr. Victor R. Potenciano
Medical Center
is totally committed
to respond
to your needs and welfare
by providing
quality health care
with a heart.

We shall work
with dedication
to satisfy you ...

BECAUSE WE CARE!

Mission and Vision

The Dr. Victor R. Potenciano
Medical Center
is dedicated
to the highest level
of diagnostic, curative and
rehabilitative services
in response to the ideals
of humanitarian endeavor.

The Management Group and
Medical Staff are committed
to the perpetuation
of the ideal hospital
truly responsive
to the needs and general
welfare of the people.

UN declares war on AIDS

UNITED NATIONS—Delegates to a historic UN conference adopted a declaration on Wednesday containing a timetable and targets for reversing the AIDS epidemic, which has killed 22 million people.

The declaration was adopted by acclamation after a three-day special session of the United Nations General Assembly, the first ever devoted to a public health issue.

UN Secretary General Kofi Annan told a news conference earlier that the document was "a clear battle plan for the war against AIDS," which has infected another 36 million people and will likely infect many more.

"All in all, I feel more confident today than I did three days ago that we can defeat this deadly disease," Annan said.

He said what made the special session unique was that it was not limited to official government delegates but also included AIDS activists, non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and representatives from the private sector.

"The only way we can ensure that we maintain the momentum and sustain it is to get that broad participation, at the local level, at the national level and for all of us to stick with it," he said.

"If we don't, I'm afraid we are going to fail. And it is a fight we cannot afford to lose."

The conference declaration called for "an urgent, coordinated and sustained response to the HIV/AIDS epidemic," and set out goals, most of them to be met within four years.

These included making sure that at least 90 percent of men and women between the ages of 15 and 24 have access to the information and education to enable them to protect themselves against infection. *AFP*

Israel will defend self, Sharon says

WASHINGTON—Israeli Prime Minister Ariel Sharon on Wednesday applauded the US efforts to bring an end to the violence in the Middle East, but insisted there was not much to celebrate, and Israelis would continue to defend themselves against attacks.

"Israel is the only place in the world where Jews have the right and capability to defend themselves . . . and that's what we're going to do," he told reporters as he sat down to a meeting with Senate leaders.

"We have a very friendly administration," Sharon said of his meeting Tuesday with President George W. Bush. The current US administration was one that "makes every effort" to bring peace and stability to the region.

But he said, while Israel had accepted the Mitchell report and later CIA director George Tenet's ceasefire plan—aimed at stemming the Israeli-Palestinian violence that has left more than 600 people dead—and declared a unilateral ceasefire, "the answer (was) intensified terror."

"Maybe some people are celebrating but we are in the funerals," he said bluntly.

On Tuesday, Bush had said he felt progress was being made in the Middle East.

"Progress is being made. Is it as fast as we'd like? No, its not," Bush told reporters. "We are gaining by inches, I recognize, but nevertheless an inch is better than nothing." *AFP*

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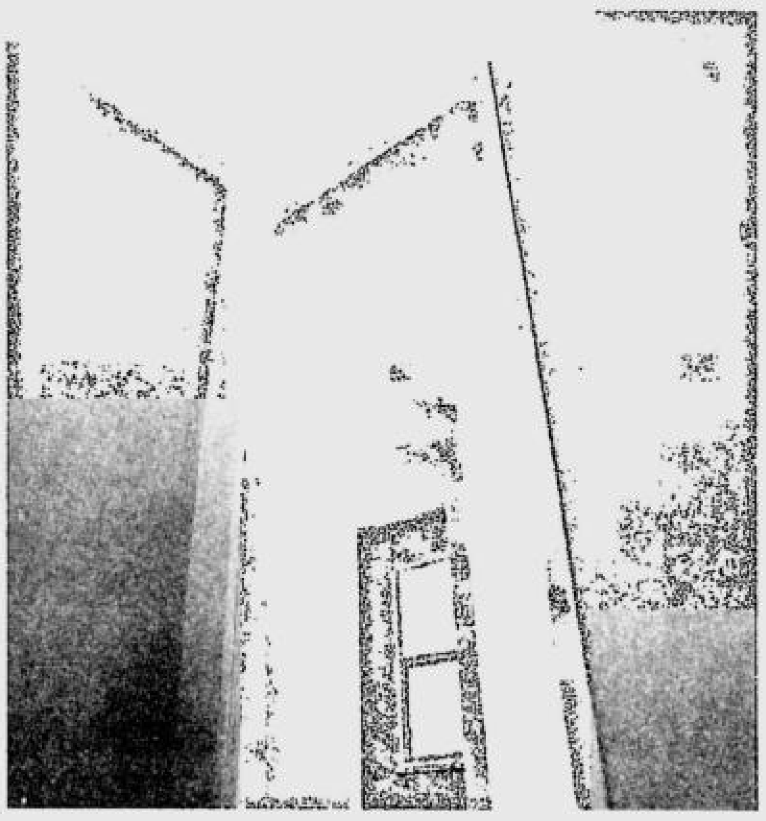

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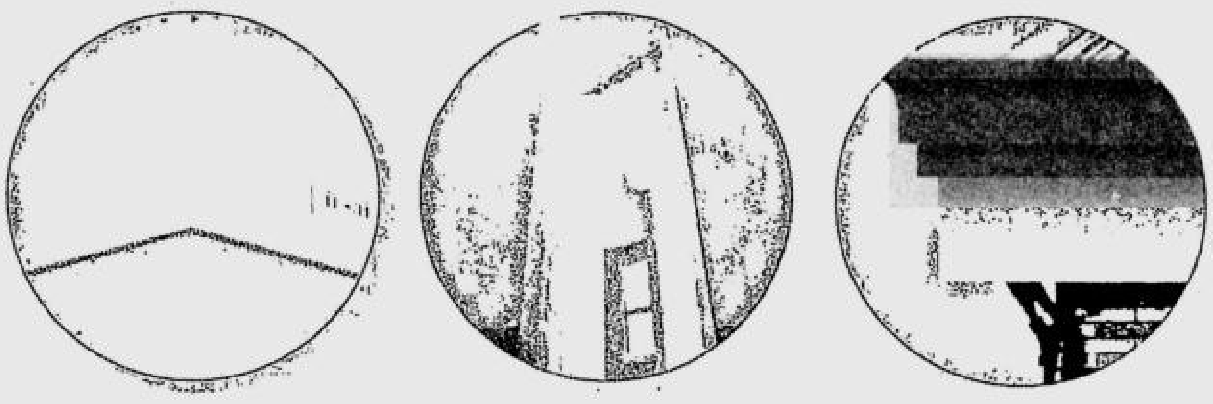

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Across the NATION

TONY BERGONIA, Assistant Editor

49-yr Sanchez reign over town ends

BY ROMULO PONTE
PDI Southern Luzon Bureau

CALAUAN, Laguna—It took someone as old as the reign of the Sanchez clan over this town to change the face of its politics.

George Berris, 49, who was a newborn baby when the Sanchezes started to rule over this town, was inaugurated yesterday as Calauan's new mayor, ending the clan's virtually half-a-century reign.

The clan started its reign in 1952 when Juan Brion, the father of convicted rapist-killer Antonio Sanchez, this town's former mayor, was elected.

Berris, a businessman, said he was committed to transform the image of Calauan town from being a supplier of "free coffins to the dead" and one notorious for "killing thieves and innocents" into a place where justice, peace and order, moral recovery and economic prosperity take center stage.

Berris made these pledges to reconstruct and rebuild the moral and economic fibers of the town that was left to ruins for nearly half-a-century during the reign of the Sanchez-Brion clan.

Berris promised to end the days during which ex-mayor Sanchez bragged that in his town "we don't jail thieves, we kill them."

And the Sanchez clan thrived on deaths. The family is known in the town to be generous to poor townsfolk who couldn't afford to buy coffins for their dead.

These, Berris promised to change. "We don't kill thieves and evildoers. Rather, we deal with them according to our justice system."

"I won't give free coffins to anybody. Rather, I will give free services," he said.

This town rose to national infamy with the killing of Allan Gomez and the murder-rape of Aileen Sarmenta, both University of the Philippines-Los Baños students.

The court convicted Sanchez of masterminding the crimes.

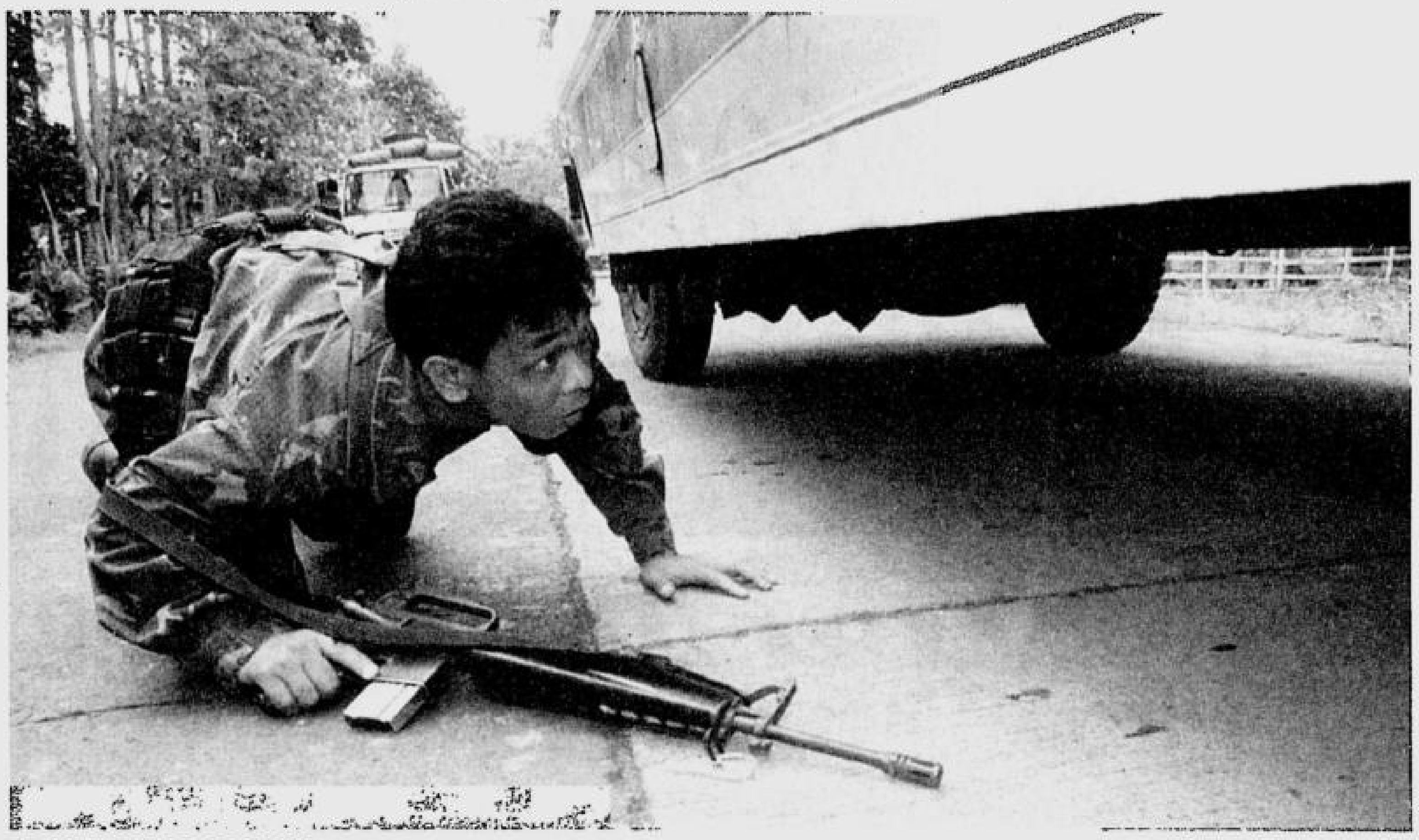
Sanchez, who reigned as Calauan mayor from 1976 to 1994, is now serving seven life terms at the National Penitentiary in Muntinlupa City.

But Sanchez virtually never left the town. According to Berris, Sanchez's wife, Editha, ruled the town the same way her husband did.

"When Editha reigned as mayor since 1995, she put the entire municipal hall in a state of martial law by introducing an executive order barring anybody inside the municipal hall from getting information," said Berris, who won by 3,000 votes over Editha.

Editha followed her husband's footsteps to the mayoral post when she won the 1995 and the 1998 elections.

Antonio, on the other hand, inherited the mayoral seat from his father, Juan Brion, who ruled as mayor from 1952 to 1976. *Romulo Ponte, PDI Southern Luzon Bureau*



DENNIS SABANGAN

CONTINUING SEARCH

The hunt for Abu Sayyaf bandits is much like the search for bombs or booby traps that could make their way into Basilan by way of buses or jeeps that are regularly stopped at checkpoints like this one in Lamitan, Basilan.

Housing lack fuels CARP land conversion

BAYOMBONG, Nueva Vizcaya—Officials and members of an agrarian reform body here expressed alarm over the rampant illegal conversion of lands by farmers, saying it could bring down the province's agricultural productivity.

Nathaniel Ramos, assistant provincial agrarian reform officer, said the lack of available housing programs in the provinces has threatened the productivity of farmlands that were earlier awarded to farmer-beneficiaries here under the Comprehensive Agrarian Reform Program (CARP).

Ramos said the lack of low-cost housing programs among poor farmers has driven hundreds of farmer-beneficiaries under the CARP to convert portions of their lands into residential areas to accommodate their growing families.

"Definitely it will lessen our agricultural productivity in terms of area because the government does not have (housing) programs for poor farmers," Ramos said during a meeting of the Provincial Inter-agency CARP Implementing Team and the Provincial Agrarian Reform Coordinating Committee here on Wednesday.

CARP farmer-beneficiaries and landholders have urged agrarian reform officials here to exempt them from the procedures and requirements of land conversion.

The move came after agrarian reform officials warned farmers against continued illegal land conversions in the province.

"The process (land conversion) is usually tedious and costly which the poor farmers cannot afford. They will be incurring more expenses than their production and, owning only less than three hectares with their expanding families, they surely need houses," Ramos said.

But he said the agencies are studying the possibility of granting the exemption only to farmers who have small farmlands that were covered by the enactment of the CARP law in 1988.

The law requires lands acquired through CARP to be subjected for clearance from the Department of Agrarian Reform and other agencies before any construction or conversion is made on the land.

Officials also lamented the rampant buying of farmlands here that are later converted for commercial or residential use.

"It seems that the process of land conversion is not being followed. *Walang nagre*-react *sa mga* local government units," said Calvin Magno, PARCCOM chair.

Santiago Bulan, provincial irrigation officer, said illegal land conversions have also affected several irrigation projects in the province that would have benefited farmers. *Ben Moses Ebreo, PDI Northern Luzon Bureau*

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CIRCULAR NO. 3-N

TO : SELF-EMPLOYED AND VOLUNTARY MEMBERS

SUBJECT : DISCOUNTING OF SE/VM ADVANCE CONTRIBUTION PAYMENTS

Pursuant to the Social Security Commission Resolution Nos. 164 and 738 allowing Self-employed and Voluntary members (SE/VM) to pay their contributions in advance on a discounted basis, the following guidelines are hereby implemented:

A. Self-employed and Voluntary Members (SE/VM) may pay their contributions in advance not later than the 5th day of the month following the first month of the period.covered by the payment.

B. The SE/VM may pay his contributions in advance covering a period of up to five years.

C. The amount of contribution shall be adjusted by a Discount Factor herein provided below:

No. of Months to Pay	3-5	6-11	12-23	24-35	36-47	48-59	60
Discount Factor	0.25%	0.75%	1.90%	4.75%	8.20%	12.20%	16.50%

D. No change of monthly salary credit (MSC) shall be allowed throughout the period covered by the payment.

All other circulars or orders contrary with this circular are deemed superceded or amended accordingly.

This shall take effect immediately.

Please be guided accordingly.

VITALIANO N. NAÑAGAS II
Chairman and President

02 May 2001

Cop kills wife, self in Tacloban

TACLOBAN CITY—A policeman assigned at the Leyte police provincial office killed himself on Tuesday shortly after shooting dead his wife inside their home in Barangay San Jose this city.

PO2 Jose Garry Brameda, 30, took a bullet in the head, while his wife,, Nora, 28, had a bullet wound in the head.

Jose was a desk officer at the Leyte provincial police office while Nora was a senior commerce student at the St. Paul Business School. She was supposed to graduate in March 2002. The couple had four children aged 10 to 3.

Police initial investigation said the couple had a heated argument after Jose accused his wife of having an affair with another man.

Jose reportedly took his 9 mm service pistol and shot his wife. He then pointed his gun at his temple and pulled the trigger.

Liberato Brameda, Jose's father, said he was outside the couple's house when he heard the two arguing. He said he did not mind it because it was not the first time that Jose and Nora had a heated argument.

Liberato then heard Nora asking for help, which was followed by two successive bursts of gunfire.

Liberato ran into the house and found the bloodied bodies of Nora and Jose lying on the floor. *Cynthia Borgueta, PDI Visayas Bureau*

Guimaras town vote canvass to resume

BY NESTOR BURGOS JR.
PDI Visayas Bureau

ILOILO CITY—The Commission on Elections has ordered the canvassing of votes resumed in a town in Guimaras province, four days before the terms of office of outgoing officials of the town and province end.

In a two-page resolution dated June 26, the Comelec's first division presided over by Commissioner Rufino Javier ordered the municipal board of canvassers (MBC) of Buenavista to complete the canvassing and to proclaim the winners in the count.

The poll body ordered the canvassing resumed after Buenavista mayoral candidate Samuel Gumarin (LDP) decided to withdraw his May 24 petition asking the Comelec to annul the canvassing results in the town on the ground that the MBC's composition was illegal.

Gumarin withdrew his petition on June 11, citing the need to speed up the proclamation of the winners in the races for governor, vice governor and other elective positions in the province and Buenavista town.

Gumarin's protests had repeatedly delayed the canvassing in Buenavista, the only town out of the province's five municipalities that has yet to finish the canvassing.

The suspension of the canvassing of votes in Buenavista delayed the proclamation of the winning candidates for governor, vice governor, and three provincial board members and the town's mayor, vice mayor and eight councilors.

Based on Comelec results of all towns in Guimaras except Buenavista, reelectionist Gov. Rahman Nava (LDP) was ahead with 27,068 votes over his opponent, outgoing board member Gerry Yucon (Lakas) who had 14,109 votes.

The Comelec could not proclaim winners the leading candidates in the provincial race as the results in Buenavista could change their standing. Buenavista has 20,481 registered voters.

The provincial board of canvassers earlier proclaimed Vice Gov. Edgar Espinosa (Lakas) as representative-elect of the province's lone district after the Comelec decided to proceed with the canvassing of results for the senatorial, congressional and party-list races.

Lawyer Rodolfo Sarroza, Comelec director for Western Visayas, said the canvassing in Buenavista would probably resume next week since all members of the MBC and all political parties were given a five-day notice before the MBC reconvenes.

The terms of office of outgoing officials, however, will end at noon on June 30.

Rexdito Reyes, Department of Interior and Local Government director in Western Visayas, said the President would appoint officers-in-charge in areas where no winning candidates have been proclaimed after the terms of incumbent officials end.

In areas where not all the winners would be proclaimed, the rule of succession will apply. This means that in case the position of mayor or governor is vacant, the winner of the race for vice mayor or vice governor will assume the vacant position.

Anti-Erap trader now Gloria adviser

CEBU CITY—The head of the Mandaue Chamber of Commerce and Industry, who openly campaigned for the ouster of former President Joseph Estrada, has been appointed presidential liaison officer for Central Visayas.

Elberto Emphasis said his appointment was signed by President Macapagal-Arroyo on June 25 and was sent to him through Deputy Executive Secretary Waldo Flores.

He said his job was mainly "troubleshooting for the President and to bring to her matters that need her attention."

"Since she can't be expected to attend to everything (in Central Visayas), my job is to simplify things for the President's consumption," Emphasis said.

But Emphasis stressed that his job is not a duplication of the function of Antonio Oppus Jr., presidential assistant for Central Visayas.

He said he reports directly to the President while Oppus reports to Paul Dominguez, presidential adviser for regional development.

Emphasis is also the president and chief operations officer of Porta Coeli Industrial Co., a division of the Norkis Group of Companies.

Asked if he would give up his job at Norkis, Emphasis said he accepted the appointment "on the assumption that I will hold office concurrent with what I'm doing now."

He added that he believed there wouldn't be any conflict of interest between his new job and his business because he is not involved in policy making.

"I can give advice (to the President). That's the most I can do," Emphasis said. "The appointment merely formalizes what I have been doing for her in support of her programs since 1998." *Malou Guanzon-Apalisok, PDI Visayas Bureau*

Police turn back on armed demolition crew

By Tonette Orejas
PDI Central Luzon Desk

IBA, Zambales—"*Wala ho. Wala ho* (None. None)."

Forty-five residents, whose homes here have been demolished, chorused and barked this loud rebuke to Supt. Rolando Lajay-Lajay, Iba police chief, when he, in a dialogue Saturday, said he sent his men "to confirm" the June 12 demolition of structures in a disputed beachfront property here.

The contested land is being claimed by a corporation owned by the family of Zambales Gov. Vicente Magsaysay and residents and resort owners in the village.

The police came a day late and when they arrived in Barangay Lipay-Dingin's Purok 5, they failed to stop the demolition crew of eight armed men.

They came on June 11 with two bulldozers and, until June 13, tore down homes and fences without any order from the courts, data gathered by the Department of Interior and Local Government's Special Operations Group Jericho showed.

Lawyer Jesus Fortez, counsel for the residents, said at least P14 million was lost during the demolition.

Since Saturday when typhoon "Emong" lashed through Zambales, the homeless residents sought shelter in the homes of relatives. Many of those left homeless were relatives of the original owner of the land, Epifanio Romamban.

"They have nowhere to stay," Fortez told the INQUIRER.

Elizabeth Merto, a resident, told Igmidio Bellido, an investigator of the DILG's Jericho, that she rushed to the Iba police station on June 12 to report the demolition and the presence of armed men.

All that Lajay-Lajay did, according to Merto, was write the report in the blotter and urge her to file a complaint, which she did later.

Merto, speaking before Jericho investigators and Lajay-Lajay, recalled being told by Lajay-Lajay that he could not act because the Jessmag Inc. might really own the contested beachfront property here.

The Magsaysays showed him titles, Lajay-Lajay said during the dialogue.

Jessmag owns 20 hectares comprising seven parcels of land in Lipay, according to Bing Gutierrez, overseer of the Jessmag property in a separate interview.

Governor Magsaysay did not appear in an interview his staff scheduled on Saturday.

The subject of the dispute is Lot 42-E-11 and three adjacent lots, all of eight hectares. Homes there and along the foreshore area, which the titles do not cover, were also torn down, said Victoria Romamban-Velasco, daughter of the late Epifanio, while showing this correspondent survey plans and titles.

Lajay-Lajay sent his intelligence operatives whom he said reported confirming the demolition but not seeing the armed men.

The residents, now more angry, growled in their seats and gave the police officer harsher stares.

They said it was impossible for the police not to see the armed men. The bulldozers rammed through houses and fences, toppling, flattening and burying the debris in no time as the armed men, wearing bonnets and their faces obscured by kerchiefs, kept the residents at bay.

Mike San Miguel, a beach resort owner who used to be with the Pasay City police, scolded Lajay-Lajay.

"Did you ever ask the demolition team if they obtained a demolition order? And if they did, did you ask them if they have a relocation plan for these people and a truck to transport them there? That's standard practice," San Miguel said.

Lajay-Lajay said he only came to the site on June 13. "I could not stop the demolition," he said.

Judge Lilia Español stopped the demolition on June 19 by issuing a 20-day temporary restraining order.

ABAD

DE VENECIA

Race tight in North for top House post

CANDON CITY—When the top two contenders for House Speaker come from the so-called Solid North, somebody has to give in.

Incoming Baguio Rep. Mauricio Domogan said in the Cordillera, it would likely be a tie between Representatives Jose de Venecia Jr. (Pangasinan) and Florencio Abad (Batanes).

Domogan said he and incoming Representatives Roy Pilando (Mt. Province) and Solomon Chungalao (Ifugao) will vote for De Venecia.

"Roy said he has a hard time convincing Representatives Elias Bulut (Apayao) and Lawrence Wacnang (Kalinga)," said Domogan. Incoming Abra Rep. Luis Bersamin, according to Domogan, would also likely vote for Abad.

Incoming Ilocos Norte Rep. Roque Ablan Jr. has been saying in public that he will support De Venecia while Rep. Imee Marcos of Ilocos Norte's second district has yet to announce her choice.

Outgoing Ilocos Sur Gov. Luis "Chavit" Singson laughed when the INQUIRER asked if he would support De Venecia's bid.

"That's a controversial issue," Chavit said, adding that he would support the choice of the administration.

Incoming Ilocos Sur Rep. Eric Singson said De Venecia approached him but he chose to support his Liberal Party mate Abad.

"They have been saying that the LP is an L-300 party because all its members can fit inside it. If I leave LP, *baka mag-dyip na lang sila* (they might fit in a jeepney instead)," he said.

"I think Abad has the edge. The composition of the House (of Representatives) is changing since De Venecia left because of the party-list members. These members think differently than the usual politicians," Representative Singson said.

But the Supreme Court on Tuesday put on hold the proclamation of the party-list winners pending hearings by the Commission on Elections on the qualifications of the winning parties.

Frank Cimatu, PDI Northern Luzon Bureau

NIA restores irrigation in Ormoc farms

By Jani Arnaiz
PDI Visayas Bureau

ORMOC CITY—The National Irrigation Administration (NIA) has ordered water supply restored to about 2,000 hectares of riceland affected by the closure of the Bao River irrigation system.

Isidro Digal, NIA assistant administrator for operations, issued a verbal order to engineer Antonio Viscarra, Bao River irrigation systems supervisor, to reconnect the water supply for "humanitarian reasons."

The NIA has cut off the water supply since May after it failed to collect P13 million in arrears from farmers who are using the Bao River irrigation system. The amount was accumulated through the years since the NIA started its operations in 1982.

Viscarra told the INQUIRER that Digal called him up about 9 a.m. Tuesday immediately after reading an article in the INQUIRER on the closure of the water supply that affected 1,000 farmers.

But Viscarra said even without Digal's order, he was set to restore the water supply because he "pitied" the farmers who had to rely on rainwater and water from tube wells since the closure of the irrigation system.

"We are only waiting for the newly constructed diversion canal to dry up which should be between now and July 1 (before we reopen the irrigation system)," he said.

Viscarra said the water supply would be reconnected before July 1 "even if we didn't receive (any) commitment from the farmers (that they would) pay their arrears."

"I already told some farmers of the reopening but unfortunately we didn't hear any commitment from them," he said. "We'll just find funds from another source to pay the salaries of our employees."

Viscarra earlier said the NIA cut off the water supply to force farmers to pay their arrears because the payment of the salaries of NIA personnel was already being delayed.

He said NIA personnel in the region draw their salaries from irrigation fees the agency collects from farmers every crop season, which were equivalent to three cavans (50-kilo) of palay per hectare during the dry season and two cavans during the wet season.

Viscarra said big landowners, who represent 25 percent of about 1,000 farmers using the Bao irrigation system, are the ones who owe the NIA most. They each owe the NIA from P200,000 to 300,000 in irrigation fees, he said.

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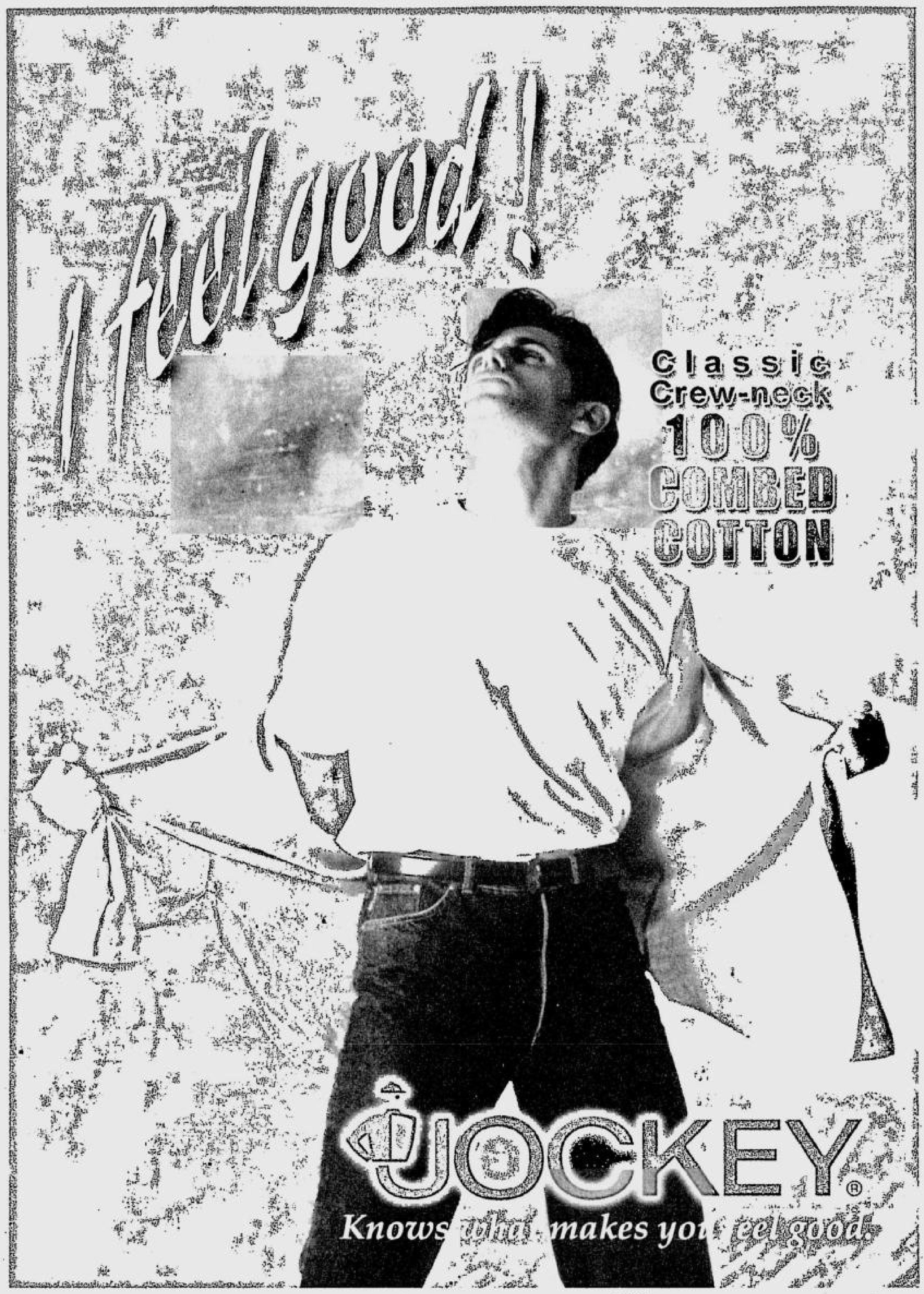
HYDROGEN SULFIDE

Plant fumes down teachers, pupils



BACOLOD CITY—Panic broke out at the Patricia Elementary School in Barangay Granada here Tuesday when 46 pupils and two teachers were taken ill after inhaling foul odor from a nearby plant of the San Miguel Corp. (SMC).

Eighteen of the victims were rushed to hospitals while the rest were treated at the SMC clinic after they suffered head and stomach pains.

The teachers were identified as Joy Descaya and Quijote Restituto, 40. Descaya was confined at a hospital in Bacolod while Restituto received first aid treatment at the SMC clinic.

The pupils who were downed by the fumes were aged 8 to 12 years old.

Noel Lopena, SMC safety officer, said the foul odor came from hydrogen sulfide, which, he said, was a by-product of yeast decomposition.

Yeast is used in fermentation after which it goes through an autolyzing process that converts it into feed supplement, Lopena said.

The foul odor was caused by equipment problems in the plant when the process of converting yeast into feeds was not completed.

But he clarified that the fumes were not toxic but could cause temporary discomfort such as nausea, disorientation and vomiting.

The Webster dictionary describes hydrogen sulfide as a flammable poisonous gas that has an odor similar to that of rotten eggs.

Lopena said they were able to contain the foul odor 30 minutes after receiving reports of what happened to the students and teachers of the elementary school.

The children were crying and panicking, he said, when he arrived at the school to check the report.

Benjamin Cuales Jr. of the Provincial Environment and Natural Resources Office said the Penro would meet with SMC officials to investigate.

But he said the SMC was already addressing the problem.

Dr. Jovy Vergara, City Health Office medical officer, said hydrogen sulfide usually causes temporary head and stomach aches and vomiting.

It, however, becomes dangerous if the victims were asthma sufferers or had allergies. *Carla Gomez, PDI Visayas Bureau*

ROUNDUP

Mayor's son hunted

BACOLOD CITY—A son of Mayor Samuel Fabroz of Calatrava town was accused of killing a son of a policeman on June 23 in Barangay Bantayanon, Calatrava, 128 kilometers southeast of this city. Calatrava police investigators identified the victim as Anthony Garde, 26, of Sitio Tonga, Barangay Bantayanon. The suspect, Glen Fabroz, the mayor's son, had gone into hiding, said Insp. Darius Mascuñana, in his report to Supt. Geary Barias, police provincial director. Mascuñana said Glen, armed with an M-16 Armalite rifle, shot Garde in the left abdomen. Garde died an hour after he was rushed to a district hospital in nearby San Carlos City. Mascuñana said police have yet to determine the motive for the killing. *Carla Gomez, PDI Visayas Bureau*

Pickup purchase cleared

DUMAGUETE CITY—The Commission on Audit has cleared the municipality of Bindoy from charges that it went overboard in purchasing a Mitsubishi L-200 Strada pickup in 1999. COA Assistant Commissioner Francisco Escarda, who is also the officer-in-charge of the Special Audit Office, told Bindoy Mayor Valente Yap that the purchase of the vehicle was in accordance with audit rules. The COA conducted the audit on the request of Rep. Jacinto Paras who alleged the municipal government bought a luxury vehicle. But a four-man COA team found no irregularity in the purchase of the vehicle. The mayor and other municipal officials use the vehicle, which is registered in the name of the municipality of Bindoy. *Alex Pal, PDI Visayas Bureau*

Farm worker slain

BACOLOD CITY—A farm worker was killed and two others were injured June 22 when about 20 armed men opened fire at a farmhouse in Barangay Baviera, Sagay City, 82.9 kilometers north of this city. The victims were sleeping inside a house owned by Leticia Baylon when an unidentified group, armed with automatic assault rifles and M-203 grenade launchers, arrived about 5 a.m. and started firing at the house. The fatality was identified only as Bodoc. Wounded were Arnel Bernales and Alex Sicor, both of Toboso town. They were among the seven farmhands working for Baylon who were sleeping inside the house. Police also learned that after the attack, the suspects identified themselves as members of the Revolutionary Proletarian Army-Alex Boncayao Brigade. But police said they suspect that the attack was connected to a land dispute between Baylon and Jerry Javelosa, a relative of Sagay City Mayor-elect Fortunato Javelosa. The two are fighting over a 24-hectare property in Hacienda Luga, Barangay Baviera. *Carla Gomez, PDI Visayas Bureau*

More Albay tourists

LEGAZPI CITY—Tourism officials are claiming that tourists who were scared by the kidnapping of tourists in Palawan are now flocking to Albay province. Maria Ravanilla, Bicol tourism director, said tourists who go to Albay are among the 20,000 people who cancelled planned visits to Palawan following the kidnapping at the Dos Palmas Resort. *Rey Nasol, PDI Southern Luzon Bureau*

Extortionist nabbed

CAMP VICENTE LIM, Calamba City—A suspected extortionist who introduces himself as a communist guerrilla to his victims has fallen into police hands. Police arrested Estanislao Rivera, 50, of Magdalena, Laguna, while in the act of receiving P1 million and two cellular phone units from a certain Reynaldo Kong, project engineer of the Retreat House of the Salesian Sisters in this city. *Romulo Ponte, PDI Southern Luzon Bureau*

Body found

PUERTO PRINCESA CITY—A man was found dead on a vacant lot along Valencia Street here, 50 meters from a Petron depot. Police identified the victim as Efren Dacasin, 47, a construction worker and a resident of Barangay Bancao-Bancao, this city. He suffered 15 stab wounds in the body. Petron security guard Diomedes Bernardo said he was on his way home from duty about 6 a.m. when he saw Dacasin's body and reported it to village authorities. Bernardo also said about past midnight, he saw five men near the Petron station coming from the area where the victim was found.

Geraldford Ticke, PDI Southern Luzon Bureau

WEATHER FORECAST

FORECAST: The whole country will experience mostly cloudy skies with scattered rainshowers and thunderstorms.

SOURCE: PAGASA

Metro Manila Hi 31° Lo 24°	Baguio Hi 26° Lo 16°	Tuguegarao Hi 29° Lo 22°	Laoag Hi 30° Lo 24°
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Gen. Santos Hi 32° Lo 24°	Zamboanga Hi 31° Lo 24°	Cagayan de Oro Hi 31° Lo 22°	Davao Hi 31° Lo 24°

Compiled by: Ray Leyesa, PDI Research/06/29/01

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Nation honors best, brightest students

(From page A1)

the top 10.

After the winners had a picture taken with the President, they went off to hug the also-rans.

Nerve-wracking experience

It was a nerve-wracking experience for her and her fellow finalists, conceded Cheryl Uynicky, a management information systems graduate of the Ateneo, and who was called last among the top 10.

"You don't know when your name will be called, you have no idea, so everybody was so nervous," said Uynicky, who delivered the finalists' collective statement prior to the announcement of the awardees.

"We accept the challenge of being agents of change," Uynicky said in her speech.

Jose Concepcion Jr., chair of the RFM Foundation—the main sponsor of the awards—said the 30 finalists were selected from 326 nominees to the TOSP annual search.

Concepcion said that 181 of the nominees were chosen as regional awardees, and that a 42-member committee, made up of government officials, professionals and members of the academe, selected the best 30 students from this list.

Ms Macapagal personally presented trophies to each of the finalists. She also gave each TOSP awardee P20,000.

Great company

According to Enriquez and Uynicky, all 30 finalists got to meet only last Sunday, when they were gathered in preparation for the awarding ceremony.

Enriquez said the finalists had "bonded" and promised to maintain the new friendship regardless of who ended up winners.

"When you see what these people have done with their lives, you won't believe their accomplishments. And you feel so humbled before them because you are in great company," Uynicky added.

More women

This year's TOSP roster had more women than men.

The other winners are Alde Carlo P. Gavino, a medicine graduate of the University of the Philippines in Manila; Ma. Teresa J. Galido, mathematics, Colegio de San Agustin; Alvin Lorenzo, biology, Far Eastern University; Bryan Christopher N. Que, civil engineering, De la Salle University; Bai Amelia M. Abo, civil engineering, Notre Dame University; Valerie S. Ku, chemical engineering, University of Santo Tomas; Katherine D. Fernandez, music, UP Diliman; and Vanessa Ann C. Remoquillo, communication arts, Ateneo de Davao University.

Also among the finalists were Jonnafe S. Gaylo, Ma. Lourdes C. Gutierrez, Geraldine Y. Yabis, Millette Romualdez, Johncy Rose M. Concepcion, Jamielyn R. de la Cruz, Ma. Theresa H. Santos, Verna V. Duque, Ronald C. Lopez, Mary Jane M. Manalang, Francia P. Sales, Fritz Ritchie N. Avila, Grace C. Tan, Carlos B. Barretto Jr., Ritchie A. Asibal, Glenna Rae T. Callao, Karen L. Cua, Nino Jesus B. Raneses, Judith Vanessa D. Verdadero, and Tyrone Bob C. Velasquez.

TEN OUTSTANDING students of the Philippines awardees pose with President Macapagal and Mr. Mike Arroyo. From left, Cherry Uynicky, Vanessa Ann Remoqillo, Katherine Anne Victoria Fernandez, Valerie Kui, Bai Amelia Abo, Alvin Lorenzo, Rutchelle Enriquez, Ma. Teresa Galido, Aide Carlo Gavino, Bryan Christopher Que.

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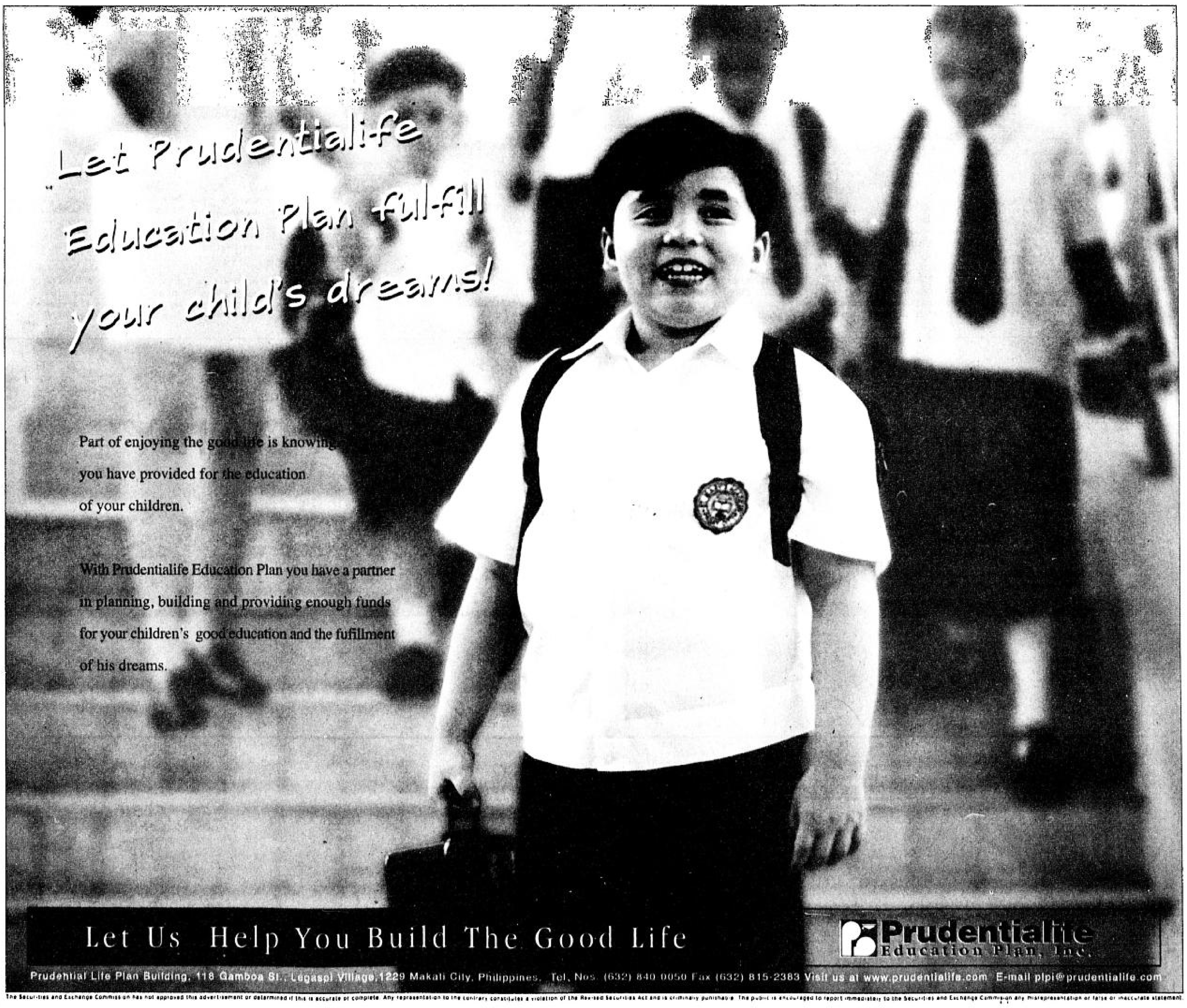
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Pro-Ping Navy unit disbanded

(From page A1)

allowances from certain personalities," Adan said without naming Lacson.

But he noted that the SRU was "formerly attached" to the PAOCTF and that its men were given "extra allowances" and "incentives" by the anti-crime agency during Lacson's term.

"That is the basis of the chief of staff (for disbanding the unit)," Adan said.

Earlier published reports, which quoted Camp Crame sources, identified the three SRU officers as Lt. Senior Grade Don Anthony Miraflor, Lt. Junior Grade Leo Dimoc and a certain Lt. Junior Grade Camino.

Each of the SRU officers and men were said to be receiving up to P10,000 a month—the same figures known to the AFP leadership, Adan said.

Reassignment

Adan said the AFP leadership thought it wise to "prevent the possible exploitation of this unit" by breaking it up.

"They're for reassignment to various units in the Navy," he said of the SRU officers and men. "If their professionalism is proven, if their loyalty is not in doubt, they will get what is due them from the Armed Forces."

Adan said the AFP was looking into the recent activities of the SRU. He said that while the unit's officers were good men, "their performances are being evaluated."

Villanueva may reconsider his decision to disband the unit "if he finds it necessary," Adan said.

In the late 1980s, the men of the Special Warfare Group helped then Army Col. Gregorio Honasan escape from the prison ship where he was held following a failed coup attempt against the administration of President Corazon Aquino.

Honasan, like Lacson a 1971 graduate of the Philippine Military Academy, was reelected senator during the May elections.

The two men are known supporters of Estrada.

Earlier published reports also claimed that the SRU had failed to return sophisticated bombing devices, the use of which they had received training from British experts.

But Adan said PNP Deputy Director General Hermogenes Ebdane had phoned him "to say that the reported missing items are all accounted for, and were brought back by the British."

Ebdane briefly replaced Lacson as PAOCTF chief when Estrada was deposed.

Loyalty

At Camp Guillermo Nakar in Lucena City, the spokesperson of the AFP Southern Luzon Command declared that its officers and men would remain loyal to the Constitution.

Col. Danilo Fabian said whoever would offer money to Solcom officers and soldiers in exchange for participating in the supposed destabilization plot would fail.

"They cannot entice the Solcom's officers and men. Besides, launching destabilization moves at this point of the country's history is unpatriotic when what the country and our people need now is unity," he said.

Fabian said the AFP had learned much from previous destabilization moves. "So it's now really difficult to entice officers (to join such a plot)," he said.

He also said all troops in the Bicol and Southern Tagalog regions had been alerted to avert the supposed plot. "We are ready to defend the duly constituted authority," he added.

A recent military intelligence report said soldiers deployed in the insurgency spots in the two regions, particularly the Bondoc Peninsula and the Bicol-Quezon boundary, were under strict orders to doubly monitor the movements of the New People's Army guerrillas operating there.

The report said that should the destabilization plot materialize, the dissident forces could take advantage of the situation.

Barricades

The President yesterday ordered the dismantling of barricades put up at the entrances of Malacañang, but her spokesperson Rigoberto Tiglao said this did not mean that the Palace was lowering its guard.

"We have to emphasize that the Presidential Security Group still has its plans to meet any kind of threat," Tiglao said at a news briefing.

He said the President issued an order to the PSG to remove the container vans and barbed wire that were installed to block parties, particularly supporters of Estrada, intending to mount a repeat of the May 1 loyalist attack on the Palace.

There are three main entrances to the Palace—Arlegui, Mendiola and that after the Ayala Bridge. Mendiola was sealed off to motorists after the May 1 siege. The PSG had also closed Gate 7, which serves as the main gate to the Palace.

Last week, the President disclosed the supposed plans of Estrada's allies to destabilize her administration in time for his arraignment on charges before the Sandiganbayan.

Estrada's arraignment on the lesser charge of perjury pushed through on Wednesday, but it was uneventful. On the same day, The President told CNN that the supposed plotters were not able to muster support for their cause.

At yesterday's briefing, Tiglao said Malacanang was "happy that so far, such plots appear not to have gained any real force."

He defended Malacanang's decision to disclose the supposed destabilization plot, saying this was to offset a "source of concern for investors."

He said the President felt that she did nothing wrong in informing the public about the supposed latest plot.

"In this case, we reported the intelligence reports, and it sends a signal that we are prepared for (destabilization moves)," Tiglao said "By sending the signal that we know what (the plotters) are doing, we are telling investors that we know this, we are planning for this."

This tends to have a "positive impact," he said. ***With reports from Christine Avendano in Manila; Delfin T. Mallari Jr., PDI Southern Luzon Bureau***

PAOCTF agent says Bentain buried alive

(From page A1)

dered the assassination of certain people including Vice President Teofisto Guingona, former Ilocos Sur Gov. Luis "Chavit" Singson and Ombudsman Aniano Desierto to further destabilize the administration.

"I'm sure the President will seriously consider meeting this civilian agent," presidential spokesperson Rigoberto Tiglao said when asked whether President Macapagal-Arroyo would meet with the former PAOCTF agent.

Wycoco was shown a copy of Ador's sworn statement during their meeting which the INQUIRER was invited to witness.

"Your revelations are very, very sensitive. These are very explosive," Wycoco said of Ador's affidavit after reading it.

It was at this point that Wycoco asked Ador whether he was willing to be subjected to a polygraph test.

Wycoco also asked if Ador was willing to file charges against those he named in the affidavit. Ador said yes to both requests.

Aside from Lacson, Ador alleged that the senator-elect's protegés, Senior Superintendents Cesar Mancao and Michael Ray Aquino, had played major roles in the kidnappings staged by the PAOCTF.

Mancao denied Ador's charges on dzBB. Aquino, through a friend, said he would rather wait for Ador to surface publicly and execute an affidavit in the presence of authorities before he would issue a statement.

Both Aquino and Mancao have been implicated in the abduction and double-murder of public relations practitioner Salvador "Bubby" Dacer and his driver Emmanuel Corbito.

In his affidavit, Ador said PAOCTF agents involved in kidnappings met regularly at the Kingswood Subdivision on Sumulong Highway in Marikina. A check showed the place's name is Kingsville.

The affidavit said that on May 11, Ador and other PAOCTF agents arrived at the safehouse at 11 p.m. The others included "Mar," "Mang Ben," "Toyo," "Greg," and "George."

"We only know each other by our aliases. No last names," Ador explained to Wycoco.

Other agents Ador named in his affidavit were "S-2," "SPO2 Provido," "Danao," "Abiog," and "Bono."

As far as Ador knows, all of these agents are already dead, except for himself, S-2 and Toyo. Ador said S-2 and Toyo were both policemen.

Ador said Mancao and Aquino were the first ones to arrive during the May 11 meeting. Lacson arrived later together with a driver.

"They were aboard a green Ford Lynx that had no plates," his affidavit said.

Ador said the meeting started when Lacson, whom he referred to as "Alas," came in.

Lacson allegedly told everyone that a kidnapping spree would start on the first week of June and end in August.

Ador said Lacson handed over a folder with the names of the targets to Aquino and Mancao.

Running priest a target

Radio station dzBB's Arnold Clavio had earlier said that the targets included Raul Patrick Concepcion, son of industrialist Raul Concepcion, and his 8-year-old daughter; Integrated Bar of the Philippines president Arthur Lim; Makati Busines Club executive director Guillermo Luz; running priest Robert Reyes; Volunteers Against Crime and Corruption president Dante Jimenez; Asiaworld's William Sy; Sophia Zobel and Clarissa Ocampo.

"Do your jobs well because we need funds," Ador quoted Lacson as saying in Filipino after giving them the targets' names.

Ador told Wycoco that it was Aquino who explained to the group that they preferred high-profile targets because the kidnapping of prominent people would attract media attention and embarrass Ms Macapagal.

Ador said some of those kidnapped were a certain businessman called Ador, Gertrudes and a Singaporean named "Yeoh."

Wycoco said he heard of the Gertrudes kidnapping for the first time from Ador.

Ador's affidavit indicated that the victims were hidden in houses in Bulacan, Parañaque, Cainta, Marikina and Pasay. The group started abducting people for ransom in 1998 shortly after then President Joseph Estrada created the PAOCTF.

Ms Macapagal abolished the PAOCTF on April 17.

Ador said that he was tasked with conducting surveillance on kidnap targets.

Ador alleged that it was Aquino who determined the amount of ransom. "He radios the figure to us" the PAOCTF agent said.

The group then calls the victim's family and the bargaining starts.

"We only give them three days to negotiate. If the talks fail, the victim is killed. That's the order so that the victim won't have the chance to escape. It also prevents the family from calling authorities," Ador said.

If the parties agree on the ransom, Ador is assigned to get it from the family.

Ador said the group's preferred ransom drop-off points were the UST campus in Sampaloc, Manila; Sto. Domingo Church on Quezon Avenue and Araneta Avenue, both in Quezon City.

Ador's affidavit also contained an admission of his participation in the disappearance and alleged murder of Casino Filipino employee Edgar Bentain.

Bentain dead

"I know he is already dead," Ador said.

Earlier reports said Bentain was snatched in front of the Grand Boulevard Hotel one early morning in January 1999.

There are suspicions that his disappearance had something to do with a video shown on national television of then presidential candidate Estrada playing baccarat at the casino at the start of the campaign period.

Ador alleged that he was with the group, including Aquino, Mancao, Mang Ben, Toyo and Danao, that snatched Bentain in front of the Grand Boulevard Hotel. Its ground floor houses a branch of Casino Filipino.

"The others told me we were just going to play in the casino, so I joined them," Ador said.

The group, aboard an L-300 van, then left Camp Crame where the PAOCTF headquarters were then located, and drove toward the hotel on Roxas Boulevard.

Ador recalled that Aquino was talking to someone on the radio when the other person shouted in Filipino: "The subject is on his way out. Hurry, we may lose him!"

"Mancao and Danao suddenly pulled him inside the van. They covered his head with a backpack and tied his hands and feet. Michael Ray Aquino said we were to proceed to Pampanga and play (in the casino) there," Ador said.

At the North Expressway, Ador said he, Toyo and Danao were ordered to get off at the Tabang Exit and report to Lacson that Mancao, Aquino and Mang Ben would play at the casino in Pampanga.

Ador said he and the others went back to the headquarters to report to Lacson.

That same night, Aquino ordered the three of them to proceed to McDonald's in San Fernando, Pampanga.

Bentain in a drum

"We were brought to Bacolor, Pampanga where we saw Bentain inside a drum. We can still see his head but the rest of his body was already buried under cement," Ador's statement said.

Ador said Bentain was crying and begging for his life.

Ador quoted Aquino as telling Bentain: "*Masyado ka kasing pakialamero at iyan ang bagay sa iyo* (You deserve this because you mind other people's business too much)!"

Ador said Bentain's head was covered with another drum. The edges of the drums were sealed and Bentain was thrown into the flowing lahar "near a long bridge in Bacolor."

Mang Ben and Toyo were the ones who threw Bentain at the bridge, according to Ador.

Ador told Wycoco that Mang Ben was a trusted Lacson aide, who was killed with his wife and first child to silence them.

Wycoco said Ador would be put under the government's Witness Protection Program once the NBI evaluated his statements.

Opposition Sen. Rodolfo Biazon, who chairs the Senate committee on national security and defense, yesterday said reports of the alleged destabilization plot could be a "demolition job" on the opposition.

In a press briefing, Biazon said the surfacing of an alleged ex-PAOCTF agent with a list of people targeted for kidnapping by men under Lacson could also be aimed at discrediting the opposition.

"Are these attempts at destabilization by the opposition, or are these attempts to demolish the opposition?" Biazon said.

Biazon noted that there appeared to be a pattern to the linking of Lacson to major crimes. ***With reports from Christine Avendaño, Armand N. Nocum and Jerome Aning***

'Millionaire'...

(From page A1)

ficulties in getting documents from certain GOCCs and government financial institutions (GFIs).

Sources said a number of GOCCs and GFIs were not cooperating despite the President's directive coursed through the Cabinet to the heads of the public corporations.

"Some are not happy with the order because they have been enjoying these perks for a long time," a Malacañang official told the INQUIRER.

"But of course they have no choice but to follow the order of the President and the rank and file are also for it," the official said.

Executive Secretary Alberto Romulo, head of the Presidential Commission on Effective Governance (PCEG), called on the senior officers to make a little sacrifice in line with the Macapagal administration's austerity program.

Lead by example

"We appeal to their sense of patriotism and public service," Romulo said in a radio interview. "We know they just inherited the set up but now we are showing that we have to lead by example."

Budget Secretary Emilia Boncodin, PCEG vice chair, said the rationalization of salaries would help the government reduce its budget deficit.

"This is what is called an open secret but you could not say that this is illegal in the sense that they are authorized (by their charters)," Boncodin said in a dzMM interview.

She said the government would get bigger dividends from the GOCCs if the salaries and benefits of the executives were cut.

"We would like to know if their compensation package is in accordance not just with prevailing rates in the private sector but also with the austerity program," said Boncodin, a career official of the DBM who rose to the top.

But Boncodin said the DBM had been advised that it would be illegal to reduce the salary rates. She had earlier said that the GOCCs themselves could cut the salaries and benefits of their executives. But final approval will come from the President.

Millionaires' list

Among the GFIs, Winston Garcia, chair and general manager of the Government Service and Insurance System, gets the biggest compensation at P6.51 million. In the entire government, he gets the biggest basic pay amounting to P4.283 million.

Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas Governor Rafael Buenaventura receives a total of P3.683 million while his deputies earn P2.097 million.

Social Security System President Vitaliano Nañagas II gets P3.265 million; Remedios Macalincag, Development Bank of the Philippines president, P4.188 million; Margarito Teves, Land Bank president, P3.05 million; and, Norberto Nazareno of the Philippine Deposit Insurance Corp., P2.24 million.

The chair of the Philippine Charity Sweepstakes Office tops them all as she receives a total of P10, 936,272 in annual salary and other compensation and benefits.

The PCSO general manager has an annual salary and benefits amounting to P10.4 million. The head of the Philippine National Oil Co.'s Energy Development Corp. gets P7.3 million; the SSS executive vice president, P4.9 million; and the GSIS executive vice president, P5.8 million.

Romulo said he believed that the top executives of the GOCCs and GFIs would comply with the directive.

"The President's salary is about half a million. The Cabinet secretaries whose jobs are more difficult (than the GOCC heads) are almost the same. So those who are receiving so much, I think they know it's wrong," Romulo said over dzRH.

Romulo noted that while the government could not afford to build more classrooms, buy more books and build more roads and bridges, some government executives were getting "very fat salaries, incentives and other benefits."

Not right

"This is not right and I believe our colleagues in the GOCCs also realize that and will follow the President."

The two highest PCSO officials pledged to comply with the President's directive.

PCSO Chair Honeygirl de Leon and general manager Virgilio Angelo denied they were receiving P10.9 million and P10.4 million in annual salary and benefits, respectively.

But they said they had already set into motion a review of the PCSO pay scales in compliance with the President's Memorandum Order No. 20.

"We will comply with the one-month deadline," Angelo told the INQUIRER.

De Leon was reportedly disheartened by the report that she was the highest-earning government official.

She cancelled her trip to Malaysia yesterday.

In Lucena City, the coalition of farmers' organizations in Quezon said the proliferation of "instant millionaires" in the administration was condemnable in the face of the hardships of the people.

"We could barely send our children to school because of extreme poverty. Now here comes this abominable report of multimillion-peso worth of salaries, perks and privileges being enjoyed by some government officials," Rene Cerilla, president of the Ugnayan ng mga Magsasaka sa Quezon, said.

He said "public service is no longer a sacrifice. It's now a privilege being enjoyed by just a chosen few." ***With a report from Delfin T. Mallari Jr., PDI Southern Luzon Bureau***

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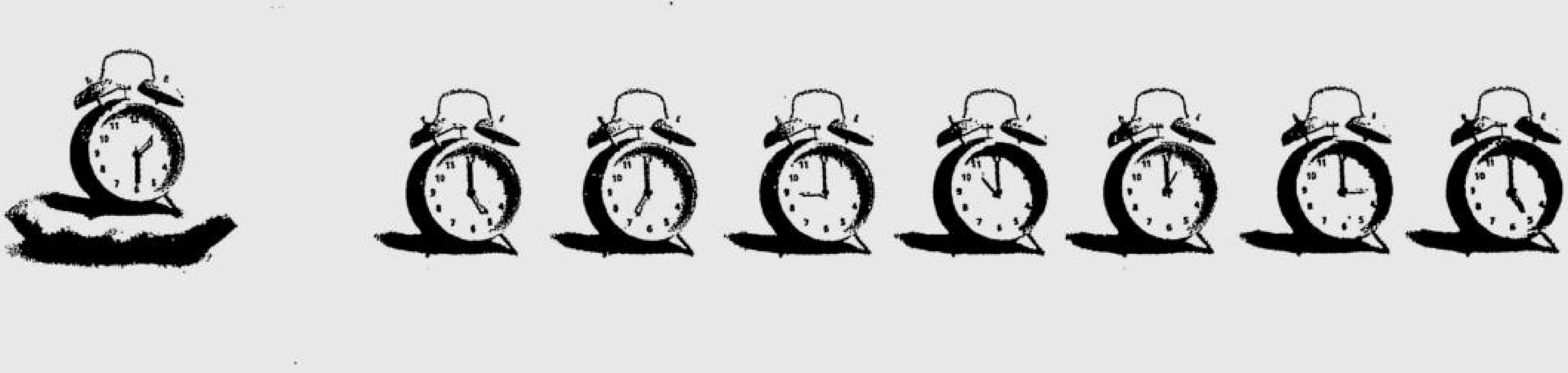

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From lord of the ring to champion of the poor

(From page A1)

And then came the invitation from the President: "Can you join me in my outreach program to urban poor communities?" She added that the people would be thrilled to see Pacquiao in person.

"I'm so excited. Imagine, that's Manny Pacquiao," she said.

Pacquiao said he was elated with the invitation.

"I'm proud that the President requested me to join her," the 24-year-old champion told reporters in Filipino.

The President said the thugs in the slum areas should emulate Pacquiao's determination and try to become professional boxers themselves.

Message to poor

Asked what message he would deliver during the presidential visits, Pacquiao said it would be hard work and hope.

"My message would be that I am also from the poor and even if one is poor, one should not lose hope and should really work hard. I am poor but I really worked hard to get out of poverty. There is hope as long as you are alive," he said.

It was not clear whether the President gave a cash reward to Pacquiao.

The President simply said "sure" when a sports official reminded that champions are usually gifted with cash by the President.

'Like my son'

The President said she knew Pacquiao before he became a champion and considers him "like my son."

"That's how I met him, he made movies with my son Mikey," she said. She described Pacquiao as "ferocious-looking but humble."

Mikey Arroyo, vice governor-elect of Pampanga, said Pacquiao played the role of his buddy in two movies—"Di Ko Kayang Tanggapin" with April Boy Regino and "Mahal Kita Maging Sino Ka Pa" with Judy Ann Santos.

"In all that he does, Manny does his best that's why I'm very proud that I am his friend," Mikey told reporters.

The President vowed to support Pacquiao in his future fights.

"The support that the government can give is to help him maximize his potential as a boxer," the President said.

She also said the government would help modernize sports training to produce more champions.

Pacquiao said he's ready to defend his title in October against Enrique Sanchez or Johnny Tapia, both of Mexico.

He is scheduled to proceed to General Santos City to train for his title defense.

He'll carry with him the unforgettable welcome he received at the Ninoy Aquino International Airport which was festive with banners and streamers. He planed in from San Francisco sporting a sweatshirt and his trademark head of golden hair.

Flooring title holder

Pacquiao, who agreed to fight on only two weeks notice, floored Ledwaba twice in the sixth round, prompting the referee to stop the fight. In round two, he also floored the South African, who had held the title for the past three years.

Asked what he would do with his prize money, Pacquiao said he would save it as "I won't be a boxer forever."

Yesterday, with his coaching staff and supporters, the champ was borne on a motorcade from Makati City to Malacañang to meet with President Macapagal.

Pacquiao was also accompanied by his wife Jinky, manager Rod Nazario and sports officials including Domindaor Cepeda of the Games and Amusement Board, Philippine Sports Commissioner Cynthia Carrion.

Viva executive Vic del Rosario also accompanied Pacquiao.

Justice's heart . . .

(From page A1)

In an urgent motion for leave, Estrada lawyer Cleofe Verzola claimed that the disgraced President was suffering "a great bout of depression" over the prospect of missing "a momentous occasion in the family."

She said that "in the spirit of filial attachment, Filipino culture, tradition and Filipino ethos, it is but understandable that accused will now come to court to seek leave to be allowed to participate in the affair, as head of the Ejercito clan."

Jinggoy's own motion for leave was filed the other day.

'We're all human'

After Verzola appealed for the justices' "compassion and sympathy" as "heads of their own families who may also have experienced the elation, pride and joy of participating in the celebration of a (relative's) successful endeavor," Badoy allowed himself to show some mushiness, too.

Later, Ombudsman Aniano Desierto even commended the justice for his candidness.

"It only showed that he shed whatever ties he had developed at the Senate when he got appointed to the judiciary," he told reporters after the hearing.

Desierto said it was fine for Badoy to have worn his heart on his sleeve in open court "if only to show that we're all human and yet we are still doing our jobs professionally."

He noted that it was the defense team who had asked Badoy to inhibit himself from the case for his alleged bias against the accused, and that the prosecution had in fact "defended him."

Objection

The prosecution threw in its own dramatic display later, as Deputy Ombudsman Margarito Gervacio opposed the motion for leave, declaring: "We prosecutors are representing the Filipino people, and we are objecting."

He argued that it would send another wrong signal of the alleged "special treatment being accorded the Estradas."

"It would blunt the strictness of the plunder law which does not allow the accused to post bail or be placed under house arrest," he said.

"I respect the culture of the Filipinos but family relationships should not come in the way of the proper implementation of the law," the prosecutor added.

Plunder case

The unresolved motion to dismiss the plunder case was the reason that the court had postponed Estrada's arraignment on that charge from last Wednesday to July 10.

Estrada's lawyers are questioning the constitutionality of the plunder law for its alleged "vagueness" and "broadness," among other reasons.

They also contend that the law violates the right of the accused to due process because it merely asks the prosecution to prove only the existence of an "overall scheme" devised by a public official to illicitly enrich himself, and not the individual crimes constituting plunder.

The prosecution responded yesterday by noting that the defense used US, not Philippine, court rulings in interpreting the plunder law.

The government's lawyers also countered that any law is deemed constitutional until declared otherwise by the Supreme Court.

'Implications'

Estrada lawyer Rene Saguisag yesterday described Estrada's Wednesday arraignment on a separate perjury charge as "premature" and said its timing had "implications" on his client's plunder case.

He made the contention in a new motion seeking early resolution of a bail petition filed by outgoing San Juan Mayor Jose "Jinggoy" Estrada before the Sandiganbayan's third division.

"We most respectfully reserve all rights and waive none, including matters related to the arraignment held in the first division yesterday, prematurely, in our view . . .which has implications here," Saguisag said.

He also maintained that the younger Estrada is only charged for one act in connection with his father's plunder case and that the act does not constitute plunder.

Jinggoy has been accused of conniving with his father and other parties in a scheme to collect money from illegal gambling, and of benefiting from tobacco tax kickbacks allegedly received by the former President.

OK to steal once?

"One act cannot a plunderer make, no matter how much he may have stolen," Saguisag said in his plea.

The deposed leader was arraigned the other day by the anti-graft court's first division for perjury after it denied a bid by both defense and prosecution lawyers to have the case consolidated with the plunder case being handled by the third division.

The first division, chaired by Presiding Justice Francis Garchitorena, said that the perjury case was separate and distinct from the plunder case and that Estrada should be tried on both counts.

Saguisag claimed that the outgoing mayor's influence would end when he left office.

"His supposed influence in jueteng will be gone in a few days. The likelihood of him continuing his supposed illactivity (sic), connected to his being mayor, will be gone by next week," Saguisag said.

"It is time that he is allowed to go home on bail as a private citizen without the clout a mayor has," he added.

The court earlier this month granted Jinggoy a five-day furlough to wrap up his unfinished business at the San Juan municipal hall.

But it later refused when Jinggoy asked for 10 more days, which he intended to cap with a farewell party with town hall employees. The party was supposed to be this evening.

GMA blows top . . .

(From page A1)

Arroyo blowing her top and yelling those words was allegedly confiscated and destroyed yesterday by officials of RTVM, Malacañang's in-house television agency.

Witnesses said Ms Macapagal lost her presidential cool when the wrong speech appeared on her teleprompter just as she was about to address the World Economic Development Congress 2001 in Kuala Lumpur via satellite at 5:40 p.m. Wednesday.

The President had edited her speech and given the corrected copy to her assistant, according to the witnesses.

But for still unknown reasons, the unedited version came up when the teleprompter started rolling.

"*Nagsisigaw si GMA dahil mali ang* teleprompter (The President was shouting because the teleprompter was wrong," one witness confided, describing the scene to the INQUIRER.

"*Mali yan! Mali yan!*" the President reportedly shrieked.

An RPN-9 crew was in the Malacañang Ceremonial Hall for a photo-op of the teleconference and captured the yelling President on candid camera, the witnesses said.

Only TV camera crews and print photographers are allowed to cover photo-ops.

Press Undersecretary Cerge Remonde, who is also acting head of RTVM, reportedly ordered staff members to confiscate the tape.

But Remonde denied this, saying that RPN-9, a sequestered network, had voluntarily surrendered the videocassette.

"That's a big lie. I was there but I was busy attending to the technical aspect (of the teleconference). I was not the one who confiscated it," he said.

He added that the camera crew was supposed to film only during the actual teleconference, and was unauthorized to shoot video before and after the official event.

But witnesses said the cameraman tried to retrieve the tape from RTVM, which gave him another tape instead.

A witness said Jenny Gonzales of the Media Accreditation and Re.lations Office tried to convince the RTVM staff not to confiscate the tape because RPN 9 could simply be asked to edit out the scene from its report.

Second time

Remonde told the INQUIRER he had asked for an explanation from RTVM for the "technical glitch."

The President was supposed to deliver a speech yesterday at an awarding ceremony for the Ten Outstanding Students of the Philippines. She didn't.

Wednesday's incident was the second time that something went wrong with the President's teleprompter.

Two weeks ago, during a press conference, Ms Macapagal noted that her teleprompter operators had fed her the wrong paragraph on areas in Basilan where the military was trying to close in on the Abu Sayyaf.

However, facing an audience of Cabinet officials, guests and reporters during the nationally televised live presser, the President just laughed off the mistake.

4 colleges . . .

(From page A1)

participants. In January 1987, 13 ralliers were killed when police opened fire on a group of farmer-protesters. This incident led to the collapse of the peace talks then between the government and communist rebels.

The bridge was later renamed Don Chino Roces Bridge in honor of the newspaper publisher, peace advocate and freedom fighter.

Among the many plans of the Mendiola consortium is the creation of a peace negotiating committee that will mediate between rally participants and government authorities to prevent violence.

The consortium is composed of the Centro Escolar University, College of the Holy Spirit, La Consolacion College and San Beda College, which have a combined student population of 40,000 and faculty numbering 2,000.

During the program yesterday morning, the Mendiola consortium announced its three-year development plan.

The group said it wanted to "espouse all the values, attitudes and forms of behavior that reflect respect for life, for human beings and their dignity and human rights."

It also said it rejected violence in all its forms and reiterated its commitment to the principles of freedom, justice, solidarity, tolerance and understanding among people.

The target for the year 2001 and 2002 is the promotion of the "core values of peace, democracy, human rights and sustainable development" among school administrators, teachers, service personnel and students in Mendiola.

By 2003, the aim is to "deepen a commitment to a peace culture" in the Mendiola neighborhood. Within this year, the "peace negotiating committee" would be operational to mediate protest actions.

By 2004, the consortium plans that the Mendiola community and schools would be "living together in peace and harmony."

The conversion of Mendiola into a peace zone was in response to the Unesco's declaration of the year 2000 as the International Year of Peace.

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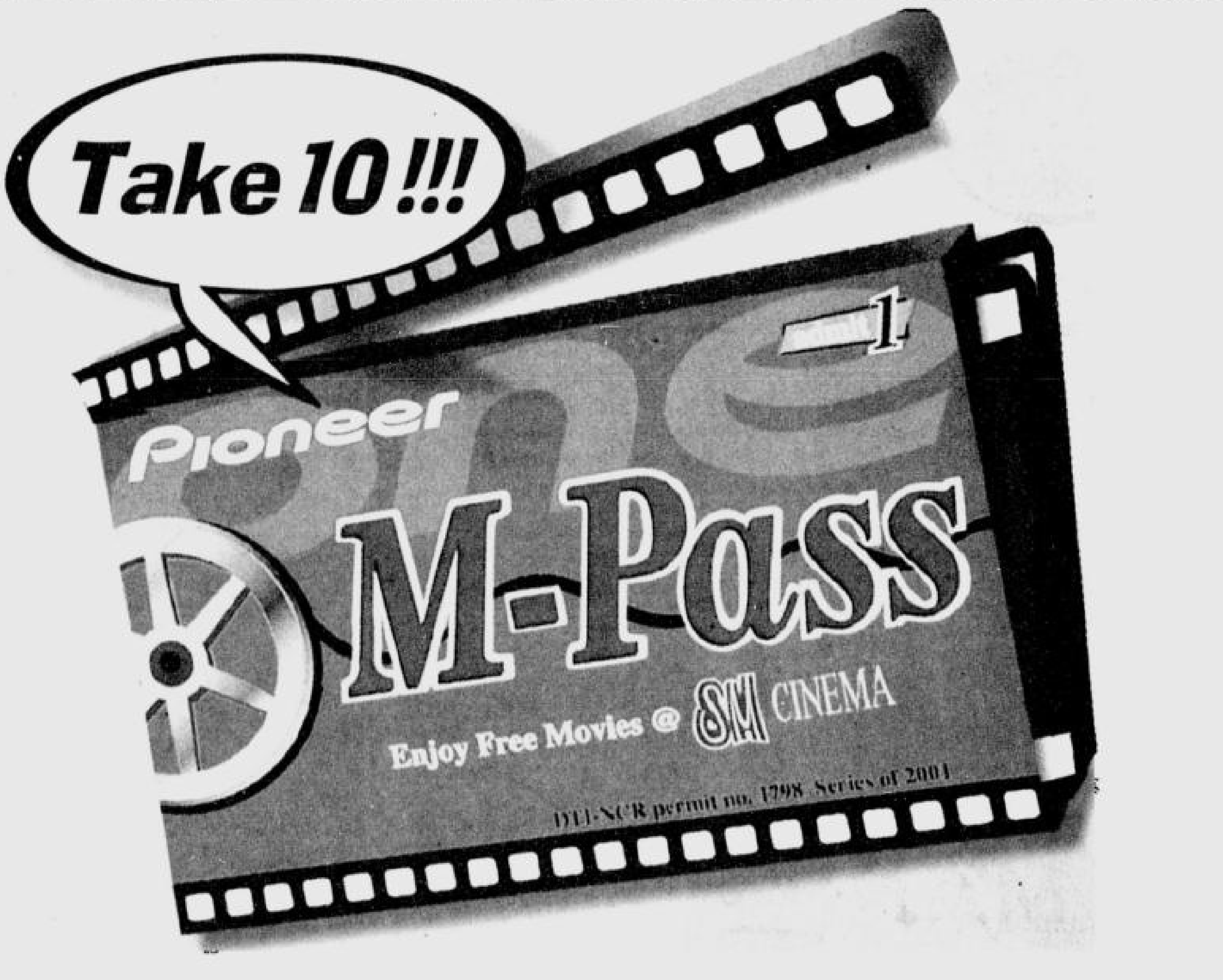
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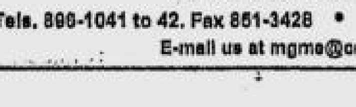
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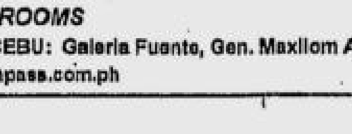
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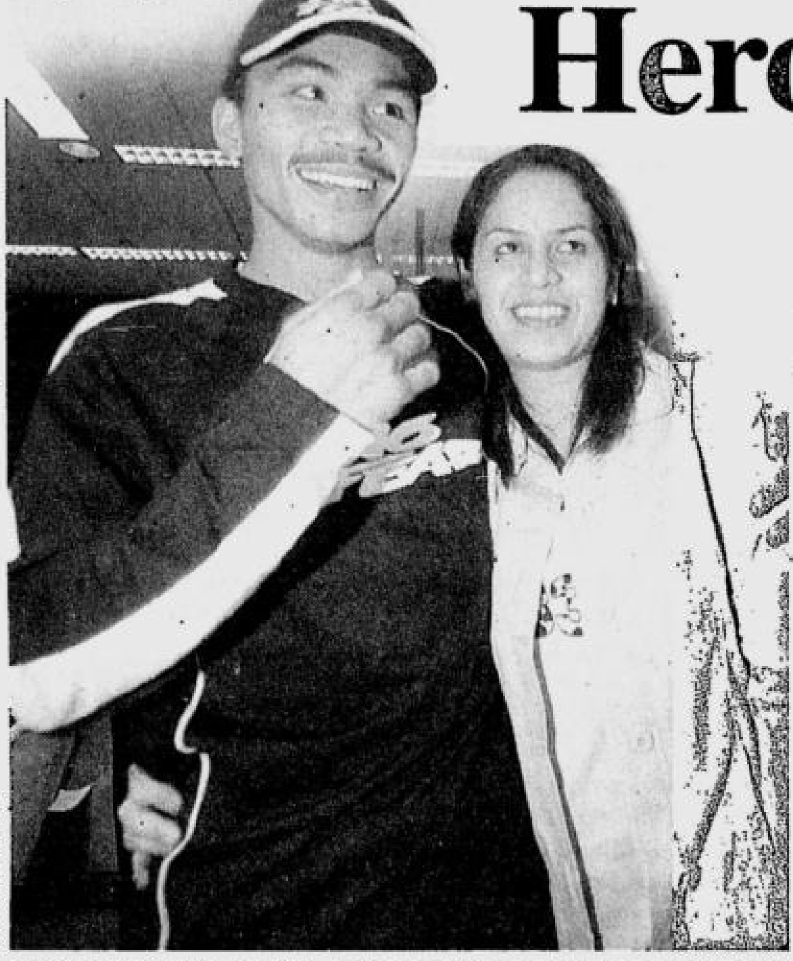
Hero's welcome for Pacquiao


ROGER MARGALLO

PACQUIAO (left) with wife Jinky upon his arrival Wednesday night.

By TJ Burgonio

MANNY Pacquiao got a hero's welcome upon arrival in Manila Wednesday night, three days after scoring a sensational sixth-round stoppage of South African Lehlohonolo Ledwaba to win the International Boxing Federation super bantamweight title in Las Vegas, Nevada.

The 24-year-old champion said he's ready to defend his title in October against either Enrique Sanchez or Johnny Tapia, both of Mexico.

"Both are tough and have a good training. That's why I need to immediately go back to training to prepare for this fight. We should not take this fight lightly," he told reporters in Filipino.

Pacquiao was greeted by sports officials, boxing aficionados and fans upon his arrival at the Ninoy Aquino International Airport from San Francisco aboard Northwest Airlines at around 11:40 p.m. Wednesday.

The boxer, clad in a sweatshirt, was grinning as he waved and shook the hands of well wishers while being led from the airline tube to the Gate 16 of the Naia terminal 1, which was adorned with banners and streamers welcoming him. He was also met at the airport by his wife.

Asked what he would do with his $40,000 prize, Pacquiao said: "I will save it up. I won't be a boxer forever. We have to have some savings once we retire from boxing."

Yesterday, he, his coaching staff and supporters rode on a convoy of vehicles during a motorcade from Makati to Malacañang in Manila, where he paid a courtesy call on President Macapagal-Arroyo.

From Manila, Pacquiao will head for General Santos City to train for his title defense four months from now.

Meanwhile, Pacquiao was honored by the Manila City government during simple rites yesterday.

Pacquiao was welcomed at city hall by Mayor Lito Atienza, who presented him a symbolic key of the city and a cash gift.

A long-time resident of Paquita Street in Sampaloc, Pacquiao started his boxing career and used to train at the Lainez-Mondejar gym on the same street.

"Manny's victory is a big honor for Manila residents," Atienza said. ***With a report from Jerome Aning***

SMB, Alaska eye q'finals; Ward replaced

By Marc Anthony Reyes

GAMES TODAY (Philsports)
5:15 p.m. — Ginebra vs Alaska
7:30 p.m. — Sta. Lucia vs SMB

SAN Miguel Beer and Alaska Milk share the same goal of securing a playoff berth for the quarterfinals.

But they will have to do it against separate opponents — Sta. Lucia Realty and Barangay Ginebra, respectively — today in the PBA Commissioner's Cup at Philsports.

The Beermen are on a roll after winning over Red Bull and Mobiline last week, while the Aces are coming from a stinging 87-81 loss to Tanduay Gold for their first loss after four straight victories.

Against the Realtors, the Beermen will have to contend with a big lineup and a talented backcourt crew although SMB clearly has the edge in practically all departments.

Damian Owens gets to showcase his talent and challenge Nate Johnson, whose subdued brand of play perfectly suits the Beermen's methodical game plan.

But that depends on Norman Black's coaching style, which tends to favor Dennis Espino and Marlou Aquino despite the fact that the duo bear the brunt of the opponent's defensive thrust.

In the other game, Alaska tries to bounce back into winning form against embattled Ginebra, which is still undecided whether to replace Ryan Fletcher with standby import Jerald Honeycutt.

Meanwhile, Mobiline replaced high-scoring import Jerod Ward yesterday and tapped its former reinforcement Todd Bernard to fill his slot. Mobiline officials reportedly weren't happy with the way Ward's game dipped after debuting with 61 points two weeks ago.

Pete squeaks past British foe

LONDON— British fans went wild on Wednesday when home no-hoper Barry Cowan came within a set of creating the biggest upset in Wimbledon history before bowing to the King of the Center Court Pete Sampras.

The 26-year-old, who had failed to win a single match in five previous Wimbledon campaigns came from two sets down in a gripping second round tie to level the match before Sampras finally stepped on the gas in the fifth to win 6-3, 6-2, 6-7 (5/7), 4-6, 6-3 in 2 hours and 52 minutes.

The struggle against a player ranked at 265 in the world was a second slap in the face for Sampras after being evicted from the Centre Court in favor of young compatriot Andy Roddick, who many say will one day inherit his crown.

Cowan's heroics apart, home hopes were further fired up by quick-fire wins for British big two Tim Henman and Greg Rusedski.

In the women's tournament Jennifer Capriati stayed on course for what would be only the fourth Grand Slam in history and fellow American Serena Williams kept the family flag flying high.

Roddick faced in-form 11th seed Thomas Johansson of Sweden, who came to London with back-to-back title wins at Halle and Nottingham. Roddick won 7-6 (7/1), 6-1, 4-6, 7-6 (7/3).

Capriati brushed aside overmatched Italian Francesca Schiavone 6-3, 6-1 as she bid to become the first woman since Steffi Graf in 1988 to lift all four Slams in the same year. ***AFP***

Pasay 4-cock derby tonight

A CASH prize of P300,000 is up for grabs in a big 4-cock derby featuring some 60 fights at the Pasay City Cockpit starting at 7 tonight.

Comebacking sportsman Boy Guinto, former pit manager of Cavite Coliseum, will host the event. Guinto has invited more than 30 cockers and breeders from Cavite, Laguna, Batangas, Las Piñas, Parañaque, Pasay and Mandaluyong.

Meanwhile, the upcoming Pasay City Cockpit'14th Anniversary 5-Cock Derby, to be participated in by more than 150 entries, is all set on July 19 and 21.

At stake in the event hosted by the PCC management is P1 million, while entry fee is P15,000. Every participant will get an imported VCD player worth P3,000, while the champions will get a 21-inch color TV each. Runners-up will get CD player double cassette recorders.

For reservation of cockhouses, please contact 816-6750, 843-1890 and 843-1746.

Racing Tips

At Santa Ana By Mr. 999

Race 1—1. The Visionary 2. Rose and Toy 3. D Contractor 4. Shot Gun
Race 2—1. Proud Conquistador 2. Ann's Magic 3. High and Mighty
Race 3—1. Make Sure 2. Mirame 3. Sealed With A Kiss 4. Wendy's Pride
Race 4—1. Duces Tecum 2. Golden Quest 3. Pen Tristram 4. Cest Magnifique 5. Rosa Valentina
Race 5—1. Crystal Horizon 2. Party Princess 3. Imperial Passion 4. Charming Belle
Race 6—1. Freshman 2. Silver Lining 3. Victoria Scarlet 4. Piker's Glory
Race 7—1. Knows Love 2. Chances Are 3. Impeccable 4. Diamond Buck
Race 8—1. Royal Harvest 2. Maniaman 3. Dial Tone 4. Magic Fingers
Race 9—1. Letshaveaparty 2. Glorious Riches 3. Something Silver 4. Living Legend 5. Daseldurf

High school stars 1-2 in draft; Brand traded

NEW YORK—Chicago Bulls general manager Jerry Krause stole the spotlight from his former star Michael Jordan at the NBA draft on Wednesday, dealing his best player—Elton Brand—to the Los Angeles Clippers for unproven 18-year-old high school center Tyson Chandler.

On a night when high school seniors were chosen first, second and fourth, the crowd at Madison Square Garden let out an astonished howl when commissioner David Stern announced the Clippers-Bulls trade.

It was the surprise moment of a night that saw Jordan make history by becoming the first NBA executive to select a high school player first overall as the Washington Wizards chose 19-year-old Kwame Brown of Glynn Academy in Brunswick, Georgia.

Chandler, a 7-foot-1 (2.13-meter) center from Dominguez H.S. in Compton, California, went second before Pau Gasol, a forward for F.C. Barcelona, went third to Atlanta.

Gasol will eventually end up in Memphis with the Grizzlies as part of a trade that sent Shareef Abdur-Rahim to the Hawks for Lorenzen Wright, Brevin Knight and Gasol. That deal won't be official until July 18.

In another trade, the New Jersey Nets sent the rights to Eddie Griffin, selected seventh overall, to the Houston Rockets for the rights to their three first-round picks: Arizona forward Richard Jefferson (No. 13 overall), Stanford center Jason Collins (No. 18) and Pepperdine guard Brandon Armstrong (No. 23).

Also, Cleveland traded the rights to North Carolina center Brendan Haywood, the 20th overall pick, to Orlando for center Michael Doleac. The Magic also acquired a future first-round pick from Denver in exchange for the rights to St. John's point guard Omar Cook, who was drafted 32nd overall.

The Bulls used the fourth pick on another high school senior, Eddy Curry of Thornwood H.S. in South Holland, Illinois. ***AP***

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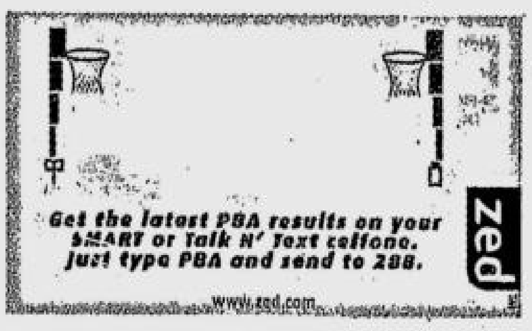
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Webb's grandfather dies

BRISBANE, Australia—Karrie Webb's grandfather died Wednesday in a Gold Coast hospital hours before the Australian golf star arrived from the United States after winning the LPGA Championship, her coach Kelvin Haller said. Webb, who had to be talked into finishing the LPGA by her parents when her grandfather had a stroke, flew in on an overnight flight but arrived at the hospital after her grandfather had died. *AFP*

SPORTS

AL S. MENDOZA, Editor ▪ **EDWIN M. VILLANUEVA**, Assistant Editor

1-STROKE UP

Que, Mexican share RP Open lead

THE LEADERS:
69—Angelo Que (RP)
69—Pablo del Olmo (Mexico)
70—Gerard Cantada (RP)
70—Cassius Casas (RP)
70—David Gleeson (Aus)
71—Ramil Bicera (RP)
72—Danny delos Santos (RP)

BY AL S. MENDOZA
Sports Editor

ONE was celebrating his birthday yesterday, the other itching to leave the amateur ranks and the third debuting as a pro.

At the end of the day, the rookie pro trailed by one.

Though they were on separate flights, birthday kid Pablo del Olmo, amateur standout Angelo Que and Gerard Cantada made some drama at Wack Wack.

Del Olmo, the Mexican from Monterey who turned 31 yesterday, and Que, the reigning amateur champion, each fired a 3-under-par 69 for a one-shot lead at the start of the 86th Philippine Open.

Olmo got his 69 with a screeching last-hole birdie from 30 feet, while Que, 22, had his by one-putting six holes and pitching in from 32 feet on the 5th after three-putting No. 1.

"It was a good birthday present," said Del Olmo, who is bidding to become only the second Mexican to win the fabled Open after Carlos Espinosa did it in 1995 in Davao's Apo Golf. "Winter rules made the course a little easier."

Preferred lie

Organizers decided on the winter rules (preferred lie) to ensure a hitch-free round in the wake of rains the night before. The sun shone in the morning but the skies turned gray in the afternoon.

But the 161 starters, 78 of them foreigners coming from 17 countries, were spared of the late-afternoon rains that normally fall at this time of the year.

Que echoed Del Olmo's observation.

"The winter rules allowed us to have better control of our shots as it would have been tough hitting balls with mud," said Que.

Cantada, the debuting pro, shot an impressive 70 to trail Del Olmo and Que by one stroke in a tie with Cassius Casas and Australian David Gleeson in the tournament co-presented by Casino Filipino and San Miguel Beer.

The 24-year-old Cantada rammed home a 20-foot birdie on 18 for his auspicious 2-under in this P9.5-million Open that stakes a Mitsubishi Lancer as a hole-in-one prize.

'Extremely happy'

"My plan was simply to enjoy the round, not to expect too much," said Cantada. "My round made me extremely happy today."

Cantada's baptism of fire as a pro was keenly awaited by a throng long accustomed to seeing him win the big ones from his days as a junior golfer up to the time when he represented the national flag a number of times.

"Last night, I was quite nervous," said Cantada, who had a sputtering start with a three-putt bogey on No. 2. Birdies on the par-5 4th and No. 6 gave him a 35 going out.

After another missed-green bogey on No. 10, he birdied the par-5 14th before blazing home with that 20-foot birdie on No. 18 for another 35 coming home.

"I was tense at the start as I was paired with good players (Rick Gibson and Rodrigo Cuello)," said Cantada. "But after my 35 at the front nine, I kind of settled down. *Sana, magtuloy-tuloy na ito.*"

Rosales falters

Gibson, the Canadian World Cupper married to a Filipina and a long-time resident here, had a 74, and Cuello, winner of two tournaments abroad a while back, shot a 76.

Defending champion Gerald Rosales disastrously careened to an 80 after a front-nine 43 marred by an 8 on the par-4 9th, where he lost a ball and next strayed into a lateral stake on two tee shots.

Rosales' first tee shot went left and his caddie claimed the ball landed on top of a coconut tree. But since the ball was never retrieved as the tree was too high for the caddie to climb, the ball was declared lost.

Among the chief backers of the tournament are Herma Group of Companies, Hope Luxury Cigarettes, Bingo Bonanza, Caffe Appassionato, Mizuno, Unilab, Riviera GCC, Philtec Label, Metrobank, Solahart, Citra Tollways, PLDT, Aristocrat Lamps, Philippine Navy, Shoemart, Unilever, Wallem Shipping, General Milling, Hanjin Shipping, Citgo, Electrobus, Greens Management, Rudy Project, U-Bix and Cinnabon.

CANTADA (above) pumps his fist after sinking a 20-foot birdie on the 18th hole.

ERNIE SARMIENTO

Pacto fights for survival

BY JONG ARCANO

HE had $24,000 in his hands, a brand-new Mitsubishi car and so much national adulation. That was in 1990, the year he won the Philippine Open at Wack Wack. It should have spelled so much difference in life for Robert Pactolerin.

Eleven years have passed and Pactolerin vividly remembers how he came from behind to slay the giants, among them now-PGA Tour campaigner Lee Porter, in getting his most glorious moment as a pro.

Not too many know, however, that Pactolerin had been through a lot since that career breakthrough.

Though he was able to buy a modest house in Paranaque from a portion of his winnings, Pactolerin later found himself spending quite a fortune for the year-long hospitalization of his father, Patricio, in Bacolod.

"I almost lost my lifetime savings," said Pactolerin of the misfortune that befell his family. The elder Pactolerin eventually died in 1992.

But there was no bit of a remorse as Pactolerin felt it could have been a lot different had he not pursued a career in golf. He doubts if his father lasted that long had he stayed in the sugarlands of Bacolod where he once drove a tractor for a living.

"If I had to spend the last penny on my pocket for my father I would have done it," he said.

While he continued to make money from his local circuit campaign, Pactolerin still had to bear the brunt of an extended family (he has eight brothers and two sisters) and paid the price of poor career decisions.

He jumped from sponsor to sponsor and even broke ties with the very people who nurtured his career at Villamor. The lack of tournaments the past two years has also forced him to take up teaching, first at the Las Piñas driving range and then back to Villamor.

He sees the Open at Wack Wack as probably one of the very few chances for survival. When he turns 40 right afer tournament week on July 3, he would like to see himself having a new, better life.

A big paycheck not just for himself, but also for a wife who is heavy with their third child.

BAPROW

Tiny told to leave office

BY JUNE NAVARRO

QUINTELIANO "Tiny" Literal and his Basketball Association of the Philippines will now have to look for a new home.

This surfaced as the Philippine Sports Commission took cognizance of the Office of the Government Corporate Counsel's recommendation, preventing the group of Literal from holding office inside the premises of the Rizal Memorial Sports Complex starting next week.

Commissioner Richie Garcia said Wednesday evening that the PSC would padlock the office space on Monday, two days after the 30-day reprieve Literal got had lapsed.

He cited the International Basketball Federation (Fiba) suspension for justifying and implementing the OGCC recommendation.

The Fiba, the world governing body in basketball, suspended the BAP early this week for having two leaders—Literal and Gonzalo Puyat II—who are both claiming legitimacy.

Businessman-sportsman Manny Pangilinan agreed yesterday to act as mediator between Puyat and Literal. Pangilinan is the chair of the POC-recognized BAP in which Puyat is the president.

"We can't allow them to use the facilities of the PSC and conduct business at our expense," said Garcia.

Literal, however, remained defiant, insisting that no amount of threat and force could compel them to vacate the premises.

He even brought up the idea of getting the support of the athletes to stop the eviction order.

Puyat's legal counsel Brigido Dulay, on the other hand, said the fight for office space in the PSC administration building "would be the least of our worries as we have to prioritize regaining the Fiba recognition."

Knights seek revenge today

GAMES TODAY *(San Juan Gym)*
3:00 p.m.—Davao vs Negros
5:30 p.m.—Cebu vs San Juan

BY ROY LUARCA

THEY'VE apologized for it, paid for it and suffered for it. The Andok San Juan Knights won't ever forget their first encounter with the Cebuana Lhuillier Gems in the Metropolitan Basketball Association First Phase.

Not only because they were routed by the Gems, 137-105, but because of the circumstances and events surrounding the controversial game on June 15 in Cebu City.

That time, the Knights went on a fouling binge with 9 minutes and 42 seconds to go in the fourth quarter while they were trailing the Gems by 16 points. In the end, the Knights made an MBA record 58 fouls, giving the Gems a record 93 freethrow attempts and 73 freethrows converted, another single-game record.

The Knights get the chance to vindicate themselves when they clash with the Gems at 5:30 p.m. today at the San Juan Gym.

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3 on 3 southern swing tomorrow in Bacolod

BACOLOD CITY—The eighth Nike 3-on-3 basketball championship begins its southern swing when it holds the second leg tomorrow (June 30) at the La Salle Bacolod Coliseum here.

Tay Tung High School opens defense of its title against a host of 19 teams out to get the lone berth to the national finals set in Metro Manila in August.

The other participating teams are Bacolod City National High School, Bacolod Taytung H.S., Cansilayan National High School, CSA—Bacolod, Jack & Jill High School, La Consolacion Shoool Gardenville, Mansilingan Christian Academy, Mansilingan Rehabilitation National H.S., Maranatha Christian College; Negros Occ. National High School, Open Door Bible Christian School, St. Benilde School, St. John Institute, ST. Joseph H.s., Sum-Ag High School, Trinity Christian School, Uno-R Bacolod, Uno-R High School, USLS-Integrated School and West Negros College.

The field will be divided into four groups, with the topnotcher in each group advancing to the knockout semifinal phase.

The semifinal winners will dispute the title in the event which will be held from 8 a.m. to 6 p.m.

A press conference will be held today (June 29) at 2:30 p.m. at the Bacolod Convention to formally launch the second leg of the nationwide Nike 3 on 3 series sponsored by Nike Inc., the company that brings inspiration and innovation to every athletes in the world and is supposed by Absolute Distillled Drinking Water, Philippine Airlines, Gatorade and Strike Zone.

SPORTS ON TV

COMPILED BY LORENZO MANGUIAT

TENNIS: Wimbledon - Day 4 Highlights at 6 a.m. (r – 7 p.m.), Day 4, 2nd/3rd Round at 12 noon (r), Day 5, Third Round at 8 p.m. on Star Sports

GOLF: PGA Buick Classic Highlights at 9 a.m. (r) on Star Sports

Inside the PGA Tour at 11:30 a.m. (r – 5 p.m.) on Star Sports

U.S. Senior Open Golf Championship - Part I, First Round at 2 p.m. (r), Part II, First Round at 5 p.m. (r), Part I, Second Round at midnight, Part II, Second Round tomorrow at 4 a.m. on ESPN

Asian PGA Tour - Singapore Open Highlights at 4 p.m. on Star Sports

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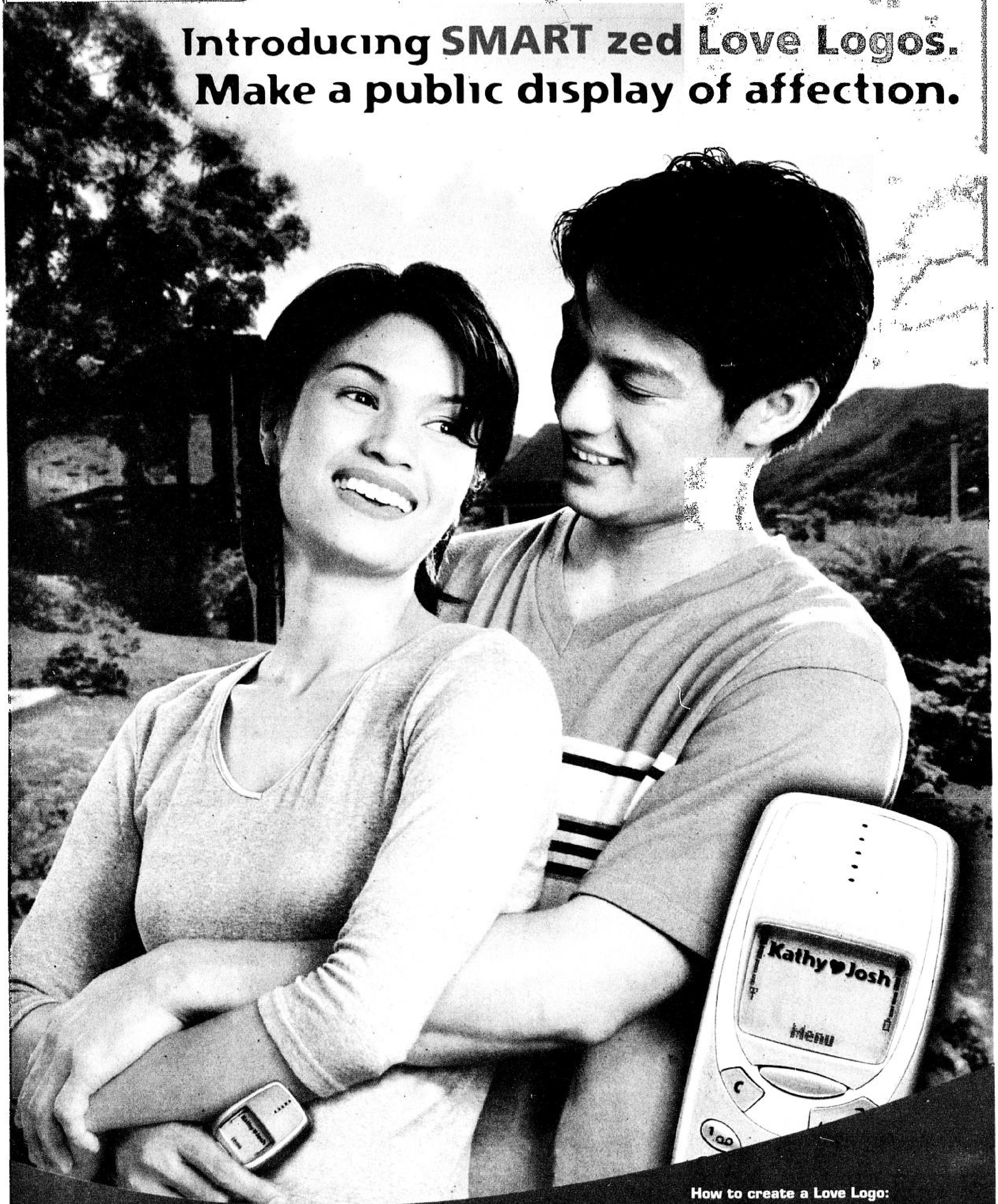

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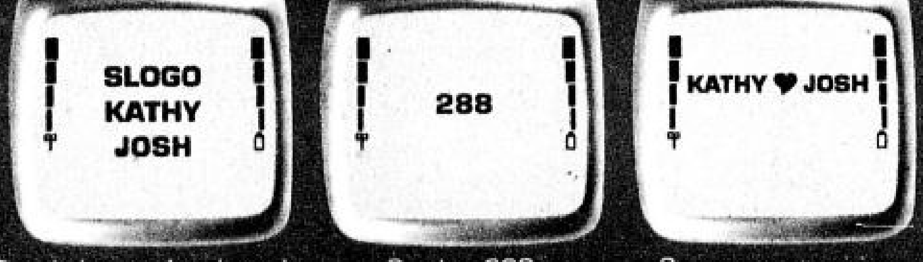

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LOUIE C. CAMINO, Editor

San Juan market vendors get TRO
A26

DENR stops Mehan Garden construction

BY CYNTHIA D. BALANA

"THE MEHAN Garden as an Asian institution should be acknowledged and cannot be wiped out of memory."

With these words, Environment Secretary Heherson Alvarez yesterday stopped the ongoing construction of a city college at the Mehan Garden in Manila and suspended the temporary environmental clearance certificate issued to the city government.

Alvarez also ordered the holding of a public hearing on the case to be conducted at the main office of the Department of Environment and Natural Resources in Quezon City.

Alvarez said construction work on the garden triggered "widespread sociological protests" which affect not only the environment but also the local culture.

Already, the DENR chief has issued to the city government a notice of violation of the initial ECC for cutting down century-old trees in the garden.

Asked whether it was within his jurisdiction to stop the construction, Alvarez said he is exercising regulatory powers as far as the grant of the ECC was concerned.

"I'm exercising my function over and above that of a policeman," he said.

The local government under Mayor Lito Atienza has set aside 8,056 square meters of the 24,600-square-meter park for the City College of Manila Academic Complex.

The National Museum and various non-government organizations condemned the construction at the Mehan Garden—now known as Sining Kayumanggi Park—saying it was a desecration of a historical site.

After the DENR hearing, representatives of Manila City Hall and those opposed to the construction agreed to meet next Wednesday to resolve the issue.

National Museum officials said the garden is an archaeological site where 13th, 14th and 15th century Ching dynasty artifacts were found.

Historians called the artifacts "Manila ware," or Philippine pottery, produced by a community of Chinese potters who lived there during the pre-Spanish period.

Hence, museum officials said it is "unlawful" to engage in construction work in the garden, which might result in the destruction of archaeological relics.

Mehan Garden is Manila's first zoological and botanical garden, established as Jardin Botanico in 1858.

In the 16th century, the areas east and northeast of Intramuros from the fortress walls to the edge of the Pasig River, which included the Mehan Garden, formed the Parian where the Chinese of the time lived.

Police watching Taguig village for Abu terrorists

BY ALCUIN PAPA

THE SOUTHERN Police District yesterday said it is closely watching the Maharlika Village in Taguig, Metro Manila following the arrest last week of an alleged intelligence officer from the Abu Sayyaf rebel group.

"We are on alert for any suspicious movements of suspicious persons in the area who have any plans of sowing terror in the city or solic-

POLICE/ A26

1 man killed in Pasig fire

BY AGNES E. DONATO

A 55-YEAR-OLD man died of suffocation and third-degree burns while two others were injured in a big fire that hit a shoe factory in Pasig City early yesterday morning.

The dead man was identified as Serafin Magtaos, of Interior FB, Fernando Street in Barangay De la Paz, Pasig. He was the brother of Fernando Magtaos, the owner of the Lady Rose shoe factory.

Serafin Magtaos was trapped in his apartment that was adjacent to the shoe shop, investigators said.

Marissa Agas and Felix Buan both sustained first-degree burns—she on the right

1 MAN/ A26

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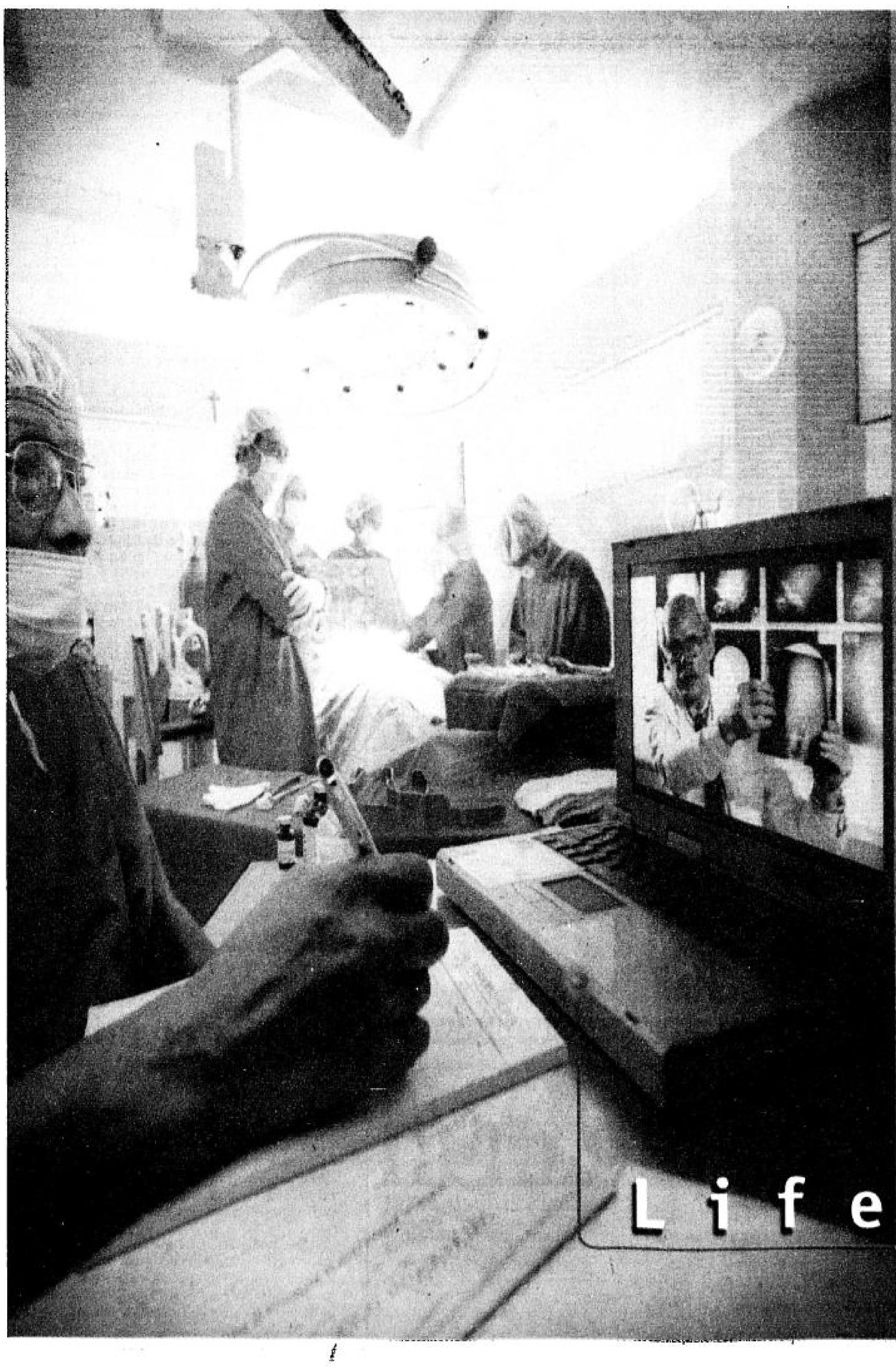

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With the advances in landline technology, videoconferencing now makes it possible to consult experts from foreign countries. In fact, this very technology made it possible to conduct remote surgery at the Makati Medical Center, with an American surgeon giving instructions from New York. Videoconferencing. Just one of the many ways that the landline is making convergence work for you.

Lifeline

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SJ market vendors win TRO

By Agnes E. Donato

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DETAINED San Juan Mayor Jinggoy Estrada has lost another battle in court. Vendors in the town's temporary public market have secured a court order stopping for three days the demolition of their stalls.

In a June 27 order, Judge Santiago Estrella of the Pasig City Regional Trial Court Branch 68 granted the vendors a 72-hour temporary restraining order, allowing them to stay and to do business in what was left of the market in the parking lot of the newly-built Agora mall.

Judge Estrella ruled that the 72-hour TRO prohibits Estrada and Megaland Resources and Development Corp. from demolishing the market stalls and other structures of the petitioners.

The judge also granted the request of the vendors to raffle off yesterday the case they earlier filed against Estrada and Megaland Resources, the building contractor.

The restraining order will take effect until Estrada's half-brother, Mayor-elect Joseph Victor Ejercito, assumes his post tomorrow.

But as of late yesterday afternoon, members of the demolition team had yet to take a break from their demolition work, which was authorized by a June 21 municipal order issued by the office of Vice Mayor Philip Cesar and signed by Estrada on the same day.

Members of the 800-strong Samahan ng mga Manininda sa Pamilihang Agora (Samapa) welcomed the court order.

"We have gone to the court because we still believe in the system," said Samapa secretary Hilario Padilla. "We were just so outraged that Estrada should pressure us like that and force our eviction from our place of work."

Some of the members, however, have already transferred to the basement of the Agora mall, in accordance with their original contract with Megaland Resources.

"We advised them to transfer anyway, because many of us are tired of keeping the barricade," Padilla said. "We don't want them to get harmed in the resistance."

Man killed in Pasig fire

(From page A25)

shoulder and he on the right forearm—while trying to run away from the fire scene.

Initial investigation showed the fire, which started at 12:40 a.m., came from the finishing area of the shoe factory.

Fire Officer 3 Teodoro Trinidad said the blaze must have spread easily after inflammable chemicals being used in shoe manufacturing caught fire.

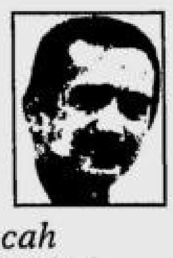
Buan, a security guard in the four-door apartment where Magtaos was staying, told arson investigators that he tried to rescue Magtaos but he was not able to get in because thick smoke and flames were already everywhere.

About 20 fire trucks from Pasig and nearby cities and towns helped put out the fire, which was declared under control at 1:30 a.m. and was finally put out about 15 minutes later.

Trinidad said it was not yet known what caused the fire, which damaged an estimated P500,000 in property.

No firemen for Mayor Atienza

BARE EYE



Recah Trinidad

AMONG those who ran for Manila mayor in the last elections, no one else knows the PR game better than Lito Atienza, the eventual winner.

Lito Atienza functions as the best public relations officer for the city mayor of Manila.

The guy, you bet, is a seasoned player of the visibility game.

You don't have to strain your eyes to pick him out in a crowd.

Mayor Atienza has a tested way of getting noticed.

For one, our man happens to be a very colorful dresser. His trade-mark get-up, shirts often aglow with big, sparkling flower prints, never fail to make him stand out in any gathering.

But Mayor Atienza is not content merely being noticed.

He loves being photographed while doing his thing.

Therefore, the regular picture we get is that of a tireless, no-nonsense hizzoner. He digs ditches, he sweeps the streets, he chases goons, he clears sidewalks, he takes charge of traffic, almost anything.

And the amazed public tends to rise and applaud.

* * *

But, hey, Mayor Atienza could also be very visible to a fault.

OK. He is, by a megman's standards, a natural. But Mayor Atienza sometimes tends to be OA.

He could also suffer from over-exposure.

At least, we, all of a sudden, have not been seeing too much of the Manila City mayor in the pages of our many national dailies, the tabloids included.

This is quite unusual. Could it be that he has fallen ill?

Pray that he hasn't, please. Mayor Atienza is one busy, visible performer his constituents adore to watch.

Anyway, we got a tip that he now thinks twice, at least, before jumping into a photo opportunity. (We call this photo-op at the news desk.)

Mayor Atienza's newfound shyness, we suspect, could've been a result of that harrowing incident at the Mehan Garden where our idol, once again, presided over the burning of video *karera* machines.

* * *

It was like this. With Mayor Atienza at a safe distance, his men proceeded to pour gasoline on the illegal gambling machines, certified social menace that regularly cheat unknowing kids of their school allowances.

With everything in place, Mayor Atienza started the ritual torching of the machines.

Of course, he also made sure that all of the cameras were properly focused.

As the black heap smoldered, however, the unexpected happened. An over-eager city hall staffer, obviously thinking the blaze was not dramatic enough for the cameras, pushed forward and poured more gasoline.

That did it. What came next was a mini-explosion that downed at least three news photographers.

Veteran Rey de Jesus of Malaya suffered a severely burned left hand. Ed Gumban of the Star was also thrown off and injured.

Unfortunately, the lensman who got the burning impact of the accident was the INQUIRER'S Erik Arazas, gutsy, tireless heir to the famous basketball-playing family.

Erik is still recuperating in a big hospital. There are reports they might have to graft skin (from his buttocks) to repair hefty portions of his badly seared thighs.

* * *

Erik was on the cell phone yesterday. There was neither hurt nor remorse in his voice.

All in the game, he told this reporter. He said the accident would have been prevented if that over-eager assistant did not pour more gasoline on the burning machines.

Didn't Mayor Atienza, as mentioned in the papers, offer to shoulder the costs of their hospitalization?

Yes, Erik replied, but he said he had to move out of the Ospital ng Maynila, where the mayor had ordered them confined, because its facilities were inadequate to fully treat severe burns.

Erik also told of how hospital staffers merely punctured the bubbly burned portions of Rey de Jesus' hands. The Malaya man was then discharged after being told that the injuries were minimal.

From what he heard, Erik said De Jesus is now having a hard time using that burned hand. He said the hand could just dry up totally due to the seared tendons and veins.

* * *

It could not be determined if Mayor Atienza has bothered to check on the health of the injured media men.

We can't blame him. It was said that the good mayor himself was jolted by the mini-explosion, with tips of his hairdo being clipped by the fire.

And who are we to blame Mayor Atienza for, again, calling in photographers to record what he must've been considered a heroic rite of burning the menacing video *karera* machines?

Maybe the public relations master in Lito Atienza demanded that civic functions, such as donating to charity, clearing the ditches, fighting illegal gambling, become meritorious and legitimate only if covered by media.

Yes, it's not City Hall that's spending for the confinement and treatment of the INQUIRER's Erik Arazas. He's covered by company insurance.

That's beside the point now. The urgent call, after the accident, is for Mayor Atienza, or whoever would like to follow in his footsteps, to bring in firemen whenever they make a public burning of illegal matters.

The firemen should, at least, be made to stand in front of the photographers.

Of course, this may never be realized. Fire hoses cannot take photographs.

Police watching ...

(From page A25)

iting help for the bandit group," said the SPD district director, Supt. Jose Gutierrez.

He said his office is coordinating closely with community leaders in the area.

But Gutierrez was quick to point out that so far, "there are no indications that they (Abu Sayyaf) are here." Still, police are taking all the possible precautions.

He said police are also coordinating with the Intelligence Service of the Armed Forces of the Philippines and the Philippine National Police Intelligence Group.

An intelligence report issued on Tuesday detailed a plot by the Abu Sayyaf Group to bomb specific targets in Metro Manila.

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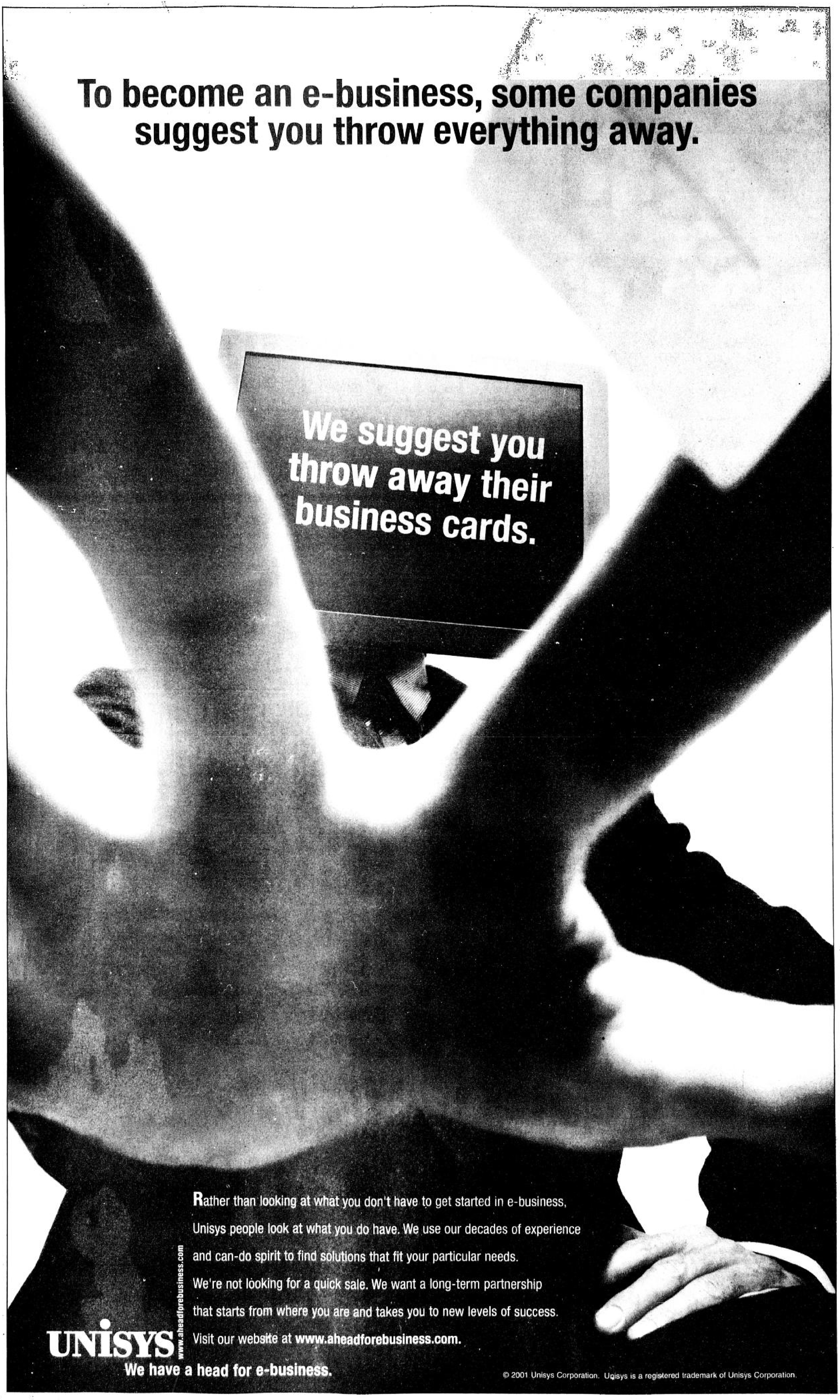

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Rosanna complaining about Diether's acting

SHOWBIZ TIDBITS

Leah Salterio

ACTRESS **Rosanna Roces** is said to have been complaining about her first-time costar **Diether Ocampo** in the movie they're making, "La Vida Rosa," under Star Cinema.

Osang reportedly got peeved in some scenes where Diether failed to live up to the acting requirements of his role.

We heard Osang say Diether couldn't match up with her acting intensity in some highlights of the movie. It reportedly resulted into tension during the shooting, although there was hardly any animosity between Osang and Diet off camera.

Filming of "La Vida Rosa" was temporarily stalled when Diether went to the United States to do a show for the Philippine Independence Day celebration. After the performance, he extended his US trip for a brief vacation. He only returned last week.

Diether is back to the set of "La Vida Rosa." He is now wrapping up the movie, directed by **Chito Roño.** We were told some of the scenes in the movie had to be filmed again because Osang was not happy about the outcome.

It's a pity that Diether's acting ability had to be censured by his popular costar, at this point in his career when he has proven his mettle both on TV and the big screen.

Diether took on the challenge of being paired with Osang after he starred opposite **Maricel Soriano** in "Soltera." The film with Maricel was perhaps the toughest for him, but little did he know that Osang would be another formidable leading lady who is critical of her costar.

Aside from finishing the movie, Diether remains highly visible on the boob-tube with his new afternoon soap series on ABS-CBN, "Recuerdo de Amor."

He also has a new TV commercial for Pizza Hut for the promo of the chain's new Mexican Cheesy Crust Pizza. Diether has completed five commercials for Pizza Hut in a span of only one year. He recently renewed his contract as celebrity endorser of Pizza Hut.

Back to the big screen

IT'S GOOD to know that after his political victory as councilor in Antipolo, **Jestoni Alarcon** is back to making movies. It has been quite some time since the ruggedly handsome actor was last seen in an action flick. Even before he made a foray into politics, Jestoni already took a respite from filmmaking.

But now, Jestoni ignites the screen anew with his derring-dos in Regal Entertainment's "Apoy sa Karagatan."

The movie marks his reunion with director **Mauro8))) Gia Samonte**, who handled him in a number of starrers in the past.

Jestoni keeps the faith that he can balance his political venture with his acting career, especially now that he vows to be active in the movies again.

"I feel that everything is somewhat new in my life," Jestoni asserts. "Politics is a new field for me and I expect to broaden my knowledge in my job. It's also a new direction for my acting career because I am now doing action movies for Regal and I'm happy about it."

In "Apoy sa Karagatan," Jestoni plays a tough and smart private eye who goes into bounty hunting when the town's richest guy (**Tonton Gutierrez**) dangles a cool million bucks to anyone who can rescue his wife (sex nymphet **Karra Kristel**) from the hands of her abductors.

Albert off to HK

ALBERT Martinez is set to leave for Hong Kong to be the official representative of Viva Films for the international premiere of "Abakada . . . Ina" at the Hong Kong Convention Center on Sunday, July 1.

Albert is the male lead in "Abakada . . . Ina," which stars **Lorna Tolentino.**

Not since **Vilma Santos** went to Hong Kong last year for the Asian premiere of her box office hit, "Anak," under Star Cinema, has our overseas contract workers in Hong Kong seen another stirring dramatic movie.

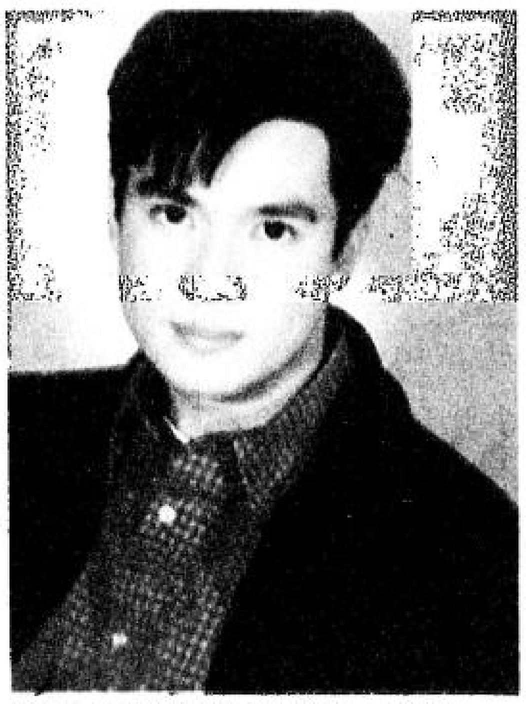
Now with the premiere of "Abakada . . . Ina," thousands of OFWs are also expected to grace the event.

Albert will be accompanied by his wife, **Liezl Martinez.** They will grace all the three scheduled screenings at 10:30 a.m., 11:45 a.m. and 6:15 p.m.

The critically acclaimed movie which marks the return to the director's chair of **Eddie Garcia**, is the story of an illiterate mom's struggle in life. Albert plays the good-for-nothing husband of Lorna.

Others in the cast are **Nida Blanca, Bobby Andrews, Matet de Leon** and **Aiza Marquez.**

The premiere is a joint project of Viva Films with Wide Screen Enterprises.



OCAMPO. Highly visible on the boob-tube

MARTINEZ. In Hong Kong premiere of "Abakada . . . Ina"

ALARCON. "Apoy sa Karagatan"

Donita on CNN

DONITA Rose was interviewed on CNN in the regional chat show, "Talk Asia," hosted by **Dalton Tanonaka.**

Donita was featured with other popular video jocks of MTV Asia such as **Cyrus Broacha** and **Karena Lam.** The three discussed regional music tastes, youth culture, show biz and other interesting topics for today's young generation.

Donita on "Talk Asia" will be replayed tomorrow, Saturday, 12 noon.

Bodyshots 2001 grand pageant

THE HUNT is on for bright and promising new male and female models with that elusive X factor as the Fashion Designers Association of the Philippines (FDAP) concludes the search for Bodyshots 2001 model competition. The grand pageant will be held tomorrow night at the UP Theater in Diliman, Quezon City.

Thirty candidates in this year's search will vie for the title.

Now its 12th year, Bodyshots has become the springboard for many of today's top ramp stars including Marina Benipayo, Wilma Doesnt, Randy Salvino, Bong Regala and Mike Sol Cruz.

Other outstanding alumni are lawyer broadcaster Rod Nepomuceno, singer Calvin Millado and actors Eric Quizon, John Estrada and Ricardo Cepeda.

Last year's winners, JP Abinuman and Jay-R Valentin have joined the ranks of Manila's most in-demand models.

Bodyshots 2001 is being presented by Marie

BODYSHOTS/A30

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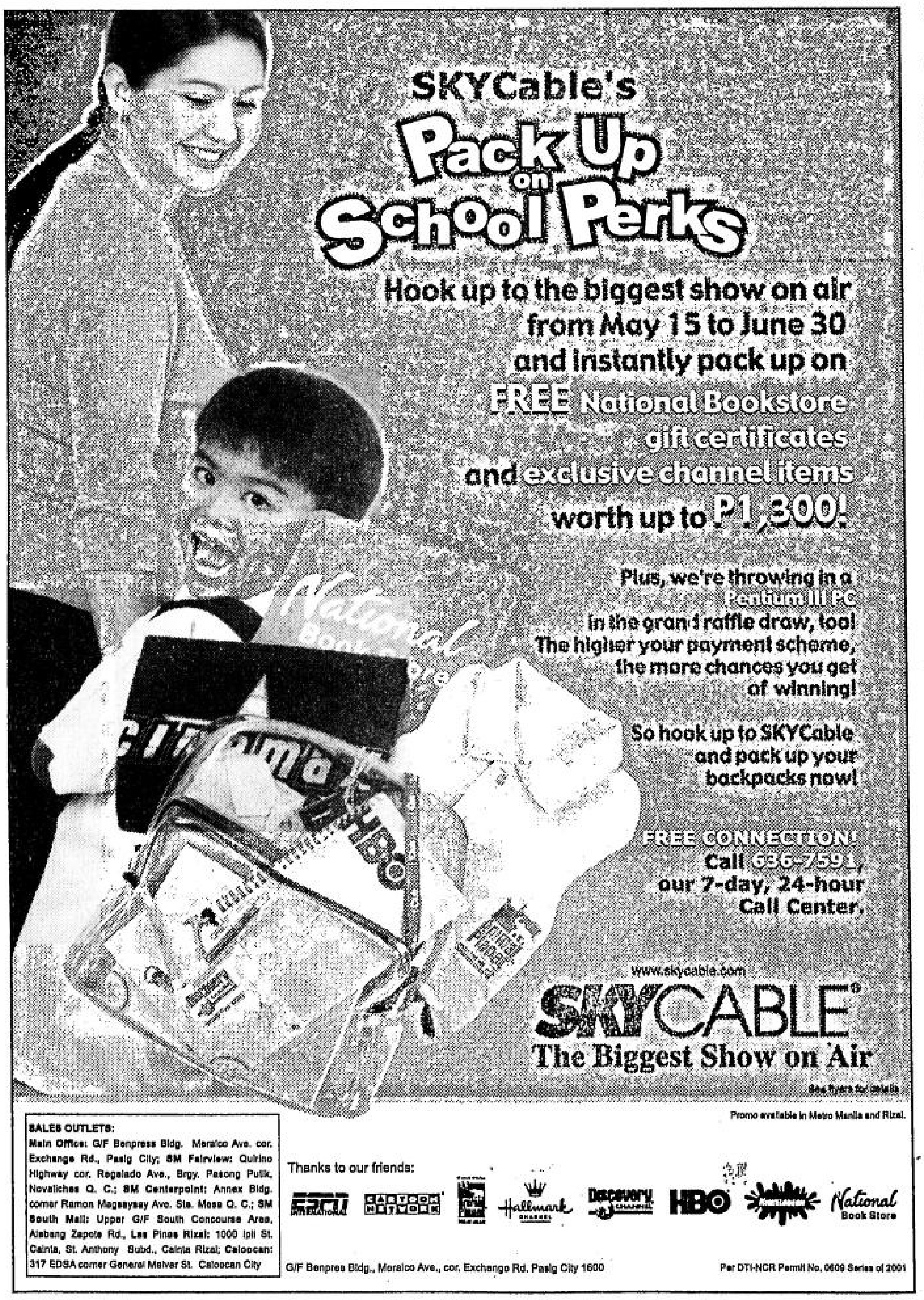

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VIEWFINDER

Nestor U. Torre

LAST Saturday, we tuned in to the popular comedy show, "Ispup" (ABC-5, 8 p.m.) to see how it was faring, weeks after the country's political "storm" had passed.

We did this because, in past months, we sensed that a major part of the show's impact came from the political events and personalities that it was spoofing.

With the elections, Edsa II and III, Erap, Miriam and other political frontliners now out of the picture, would the show remain topical and funny?

Well, the show on Saturday had a **Zsa-Zsa-Dolphy** interlude, with **Willie Nepomuceno** impersonating the King of Comedy in his inimitable way, and Zsa Zsa being spoofed by a talent who looked like a female impersonator.

Unfortunately, the impersonator didn't look all that much like Zsa Zsa, and their repartee wasn't consistently rib-tickling, so their scene was only mildly diverting.

Jon Santos came on next with his on-target spoof of **Charo Santos** hosting her signature drama anthology show. In addition to the usual drolleries, Jon added a "What if Charo were a vampire?" dimension that made the proceedings "bloody hilarious."

It was an additional step that could have been too morbid to be funny in someone else's hands, but Jon was able to pull it off in a light manner, so he didn't turn viewers off.

Then came a skit on the youth's current text madness, and Jon as **Tita Midz** in a Sine Silip portion. OK, but nothing special.

Candy Pangilinan was as busy as Jon that night, essaying a number of impersonations, among them GMA-the-Prez, and Mel-the-newscaster with the attention-calling and distracting visual and verbal flourishes.

Fine, but what really stood out was the series of "conjugal visit" blackout skits involv-

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'Ispup' . . .

(From page 29)

ing Erap and Loi. The running gag was that Erap (Willie) kept setting up conjugal visits in his detention place involving a number of nubile women, but it was Loi who would keep showing up, prompting him to get a series of instant migraine headaches.

This take-off on the "Not tonight, Josephine" gag elicited knowing giggles, and Willie and Jon's on-target performances made the running gag even funnier.

While we occasionally enjoyed ourselves watching last Saturday's show, we noted that the program's overall laugh quotient had gone down. So, the current political hiatus *has* banked some of the show's comic fires. What can be done about it?

We wish that the show's writers would create new characters to take up the slack resulting from the exit of some dependably risible figures like **Miriam**.

Noli de Castro in the Senate? **Joe de Venecia** in the House? Sharon advising her hubby on the far-out bills he should file? The First Gentleman making light of serious affairs of state? The presidential son-turned-movie-star driving his mom crazy with his show biz ways and pronouncements? **Imee** and **Kris** teaching **Luli** how to become the quintessential presidential daughter? A comic debate between representatives of Edsa I, II and III? Assorted incompetent department under-secretaries and councilors who put their stiletto heels into their mouths?

It isn't true that the colorful political personalities have faded away, they've just been replaced by other, perhaps even more colorful types. And so, to *Ispup*!

Bodyshots

(FROM PAGE A28)

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ENTERTAINMENT

LOUIE C. CAMINO, Editor

Julia Roberts up close and mesmerizing

KRIS AND TELL

Kris Aquino

I'M back, and I'm still a bit dizzy. I'm writing this column right after unpacking and taking a shower, after being on airplanes for almost 22 hours.

I saw the special preview of "America's Sweethearts" Saturday night in New York. I hope that Columbia's Manila distribution office decides to move up its playdate from mid-September to late July or early August (the film opens in the US on July 20) since the movie is just so entertaining.

There haven't been many romantic comedies shown this year, and we need a respite from all the big slam-bang summer action flicks.

"America's Sweethearts" ranks up there with "Notting Hill" in terms of feel-good romancing in the **Julia Roberts-John Cusack** scenes, plus it has even more laughs courtesy of **Billy Crystal's** impeccable timing and **Catherine Zeta-Jones'** over-the-top, yet still lovably vulnerable "diva" portrayal.

The first thing my mom asked me when I went to her house to pick up **Josh,** who was under her care during my trip, was if **Julia Roberts** was just as beautiful and charming in person. My answer was that if it was at all possible, she's even more radiant and stunning in the flesh.

Julia had a golden glow. She must have recently taken a Caribbean or Hawaiian vacation. Since I was her last interviewer before the lunch break, we left the hotel suite together, and she was so long (I'd say about 5-foot-9 or 5-foot-10, plus her four-inch stilettos) and very slim in light colored pants and a flattering pinkish-peach cardigan.

She was even chatting with her hairstylist, saying that the waistline of her pants needed to be taken in by a couple of inches since they had become loose, to which her very fit hair guy said, "You go, girl!"

Her hair was light brown with blond highlights, a lot sunnier than the dark, coffee brown it was in the film. And her smile, wow. If you can feel its impact on a two-dimensional movie screen, just imagine how mesmerizing it is up close.

Movie queen glamour

Catherine Zeta-Jones is younger than Julia, but she had a more mature, movie-queen glamour surrounding her. She has a deep voice and a sexy, throaty laugh. She was dressed in a black corsette top over a mid-length black skirt that she accessorized with a beautiful pastel-colored shawl and impressive jewelry.

I'm obsessed with shoes and I noticed that she had very beautiful black, stiletto heeled mules. Her eye make-up was smokey shades of dark brown and grey, and her hair was swept back in an elegant chignon.

On her ring finger, she had two diamond eternity bands, one with what seemed like marquise cut diamonds and the other had quite large round ones.

Warm and youthful

Billy Crystal seemed more youthful in person, and he was very warm and had a great way of connecting with both the interviewer and audience who'd be watching this taped exchange.

In the film "America's Sweethearts," he imparts a lot of rules of survival with regard to publicizing a film and surviving in the "business" to his young assistant. In it, he said rule No. 1 was to "never share the credit."

One of the questions I asked him was that if he were to share the credit with anyone for what and who Billy Crystal is today, who would it be? His answer paid tribute to his wife of 31 years, and it was so evident how much he loved, respected and appreciated his life partner.

Billy Crystal made my day when, after our brief exchange, he warmly thanked me and said that I was a "cute lady."

Those interviews (as well as my chat with John Cusack, who is very tall, large-framed and bad-boy handsome, but quite aloof when being interviewed, and producer-director **Joe Roth**) will be aired on both "The Buzz" and "Kris and Tell" the week prior to the Philippine release of "America's Sweethearts."

The best way

I took American Airlines from New York's JFK International Airport at 5 p.m. Monday, New York time, to Los Angeles. LA is three hours behind New York time, so the five-hour-and-a-half trip had me arriving in LA at 7:30 p.m. LA time. Boarding time for my PAL LA-Honolulu-Manila flight was 9:30 p.m. and we took off on time at 10:20 p.m. I landed in Manila at 6 a.m. Wednesday.

If you're taking a trip to the United States, Philippine Airlines is still the best way to get there. Coming home, I was on board PAL A340, one of their newest planes.

Columbia Pictures, which sent me for the "America's Sweethearts" international press junket, gave me the choice of going business class all the way from Manila to New York or first class on the PAL leg of the trip and economy class on my US domestic carrier.

I chose to go first class on PAL because I'd barely slept in the week prior to my departure with all my advanced tapings, and I needed to sleep well on my flight home since I was going straight to my tapings Wednesday after lunch.

I should have sweet-talked my mom to springing for my upgrade in flying across the continental United States because it was really just so uncomfortable and cramped sitting in coach.

Going to the East Coast and flying out West, I was on board really jampacked flights and I barely slept because I was sandwiched between two other passengers. I didn't want to spend the nearly $1,500 difference between a VUSA (Visit USA) coach ticket and an American Airlines business class ticket since I'd rather spend that money in Bloomingdale's or Banana Republic.

As far as my LA-Honolulu-Manila PAL flight was concerned, it was heaven. The Airbus 340 has just 12 seats in first class and you can recline the seats fully, and raise the footrest to create a super comfy sky bed.

Excellent food

Sen. **John Osmeña** was in my flight, as well as **Mrs. Remulla,** mom of Cavite Vice Gov. **Jon-Vic,** my crush, and Rep. **Gilbert Remulla,** my "sinister soul mate" **Boy Abunda**'s crush, the extremely pretty **Joyce Jimenez,** who was headed back to Manila after a month-long vacation visiting her LA-based family, and the sexiest comedienne **Rufa Mae Quinto** who was complaining that she gained weight during her two-week vacation.

Colleen and **Albert,** our flight attendants, said I was such a good passenger because they barely had to look out for me since I was knocked out almost the entire flight.

I must also commend PAL for its excellent food. I didn't have the dinner since I had a taco in LA. The snack of *arroz caldo* upon take-off from Honolulu and the breakfast of baked *adobong bangus* in garlic butter with *sinangag* prior to landing at the Ninoy Aquino International Airport (NAIA) were both sumptuous.

I'll have more New York stories to tell (my hotel, the restaurants I ate in, the Gay Pride Parade, and of course the shopping) on Monday.

Until then, enjoy your weekend!

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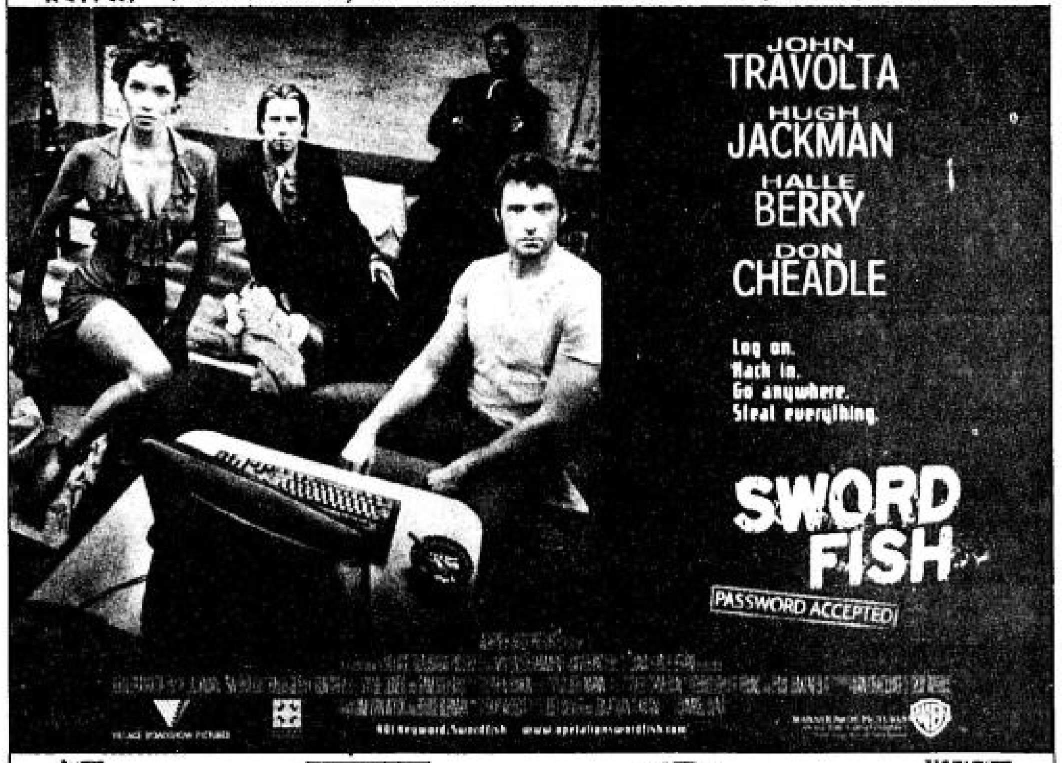

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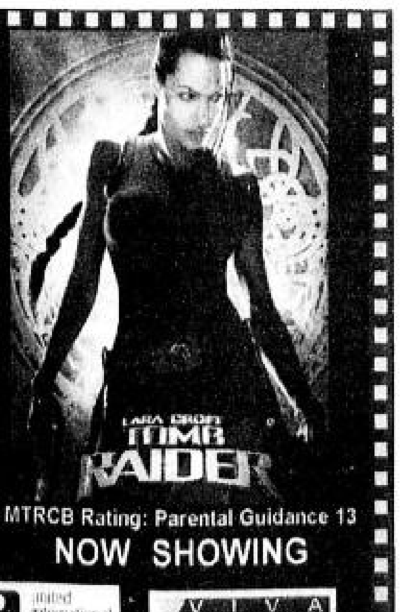

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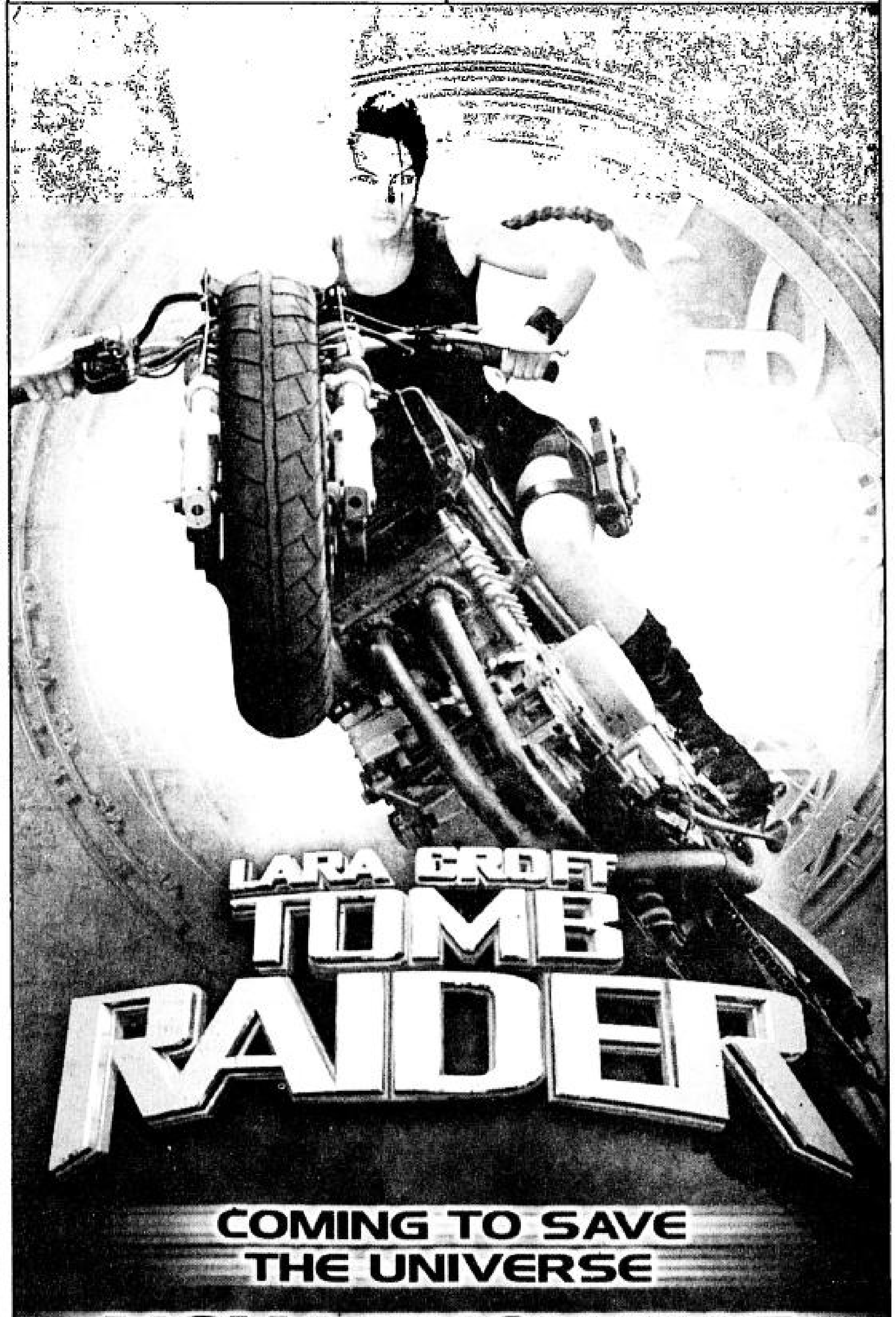

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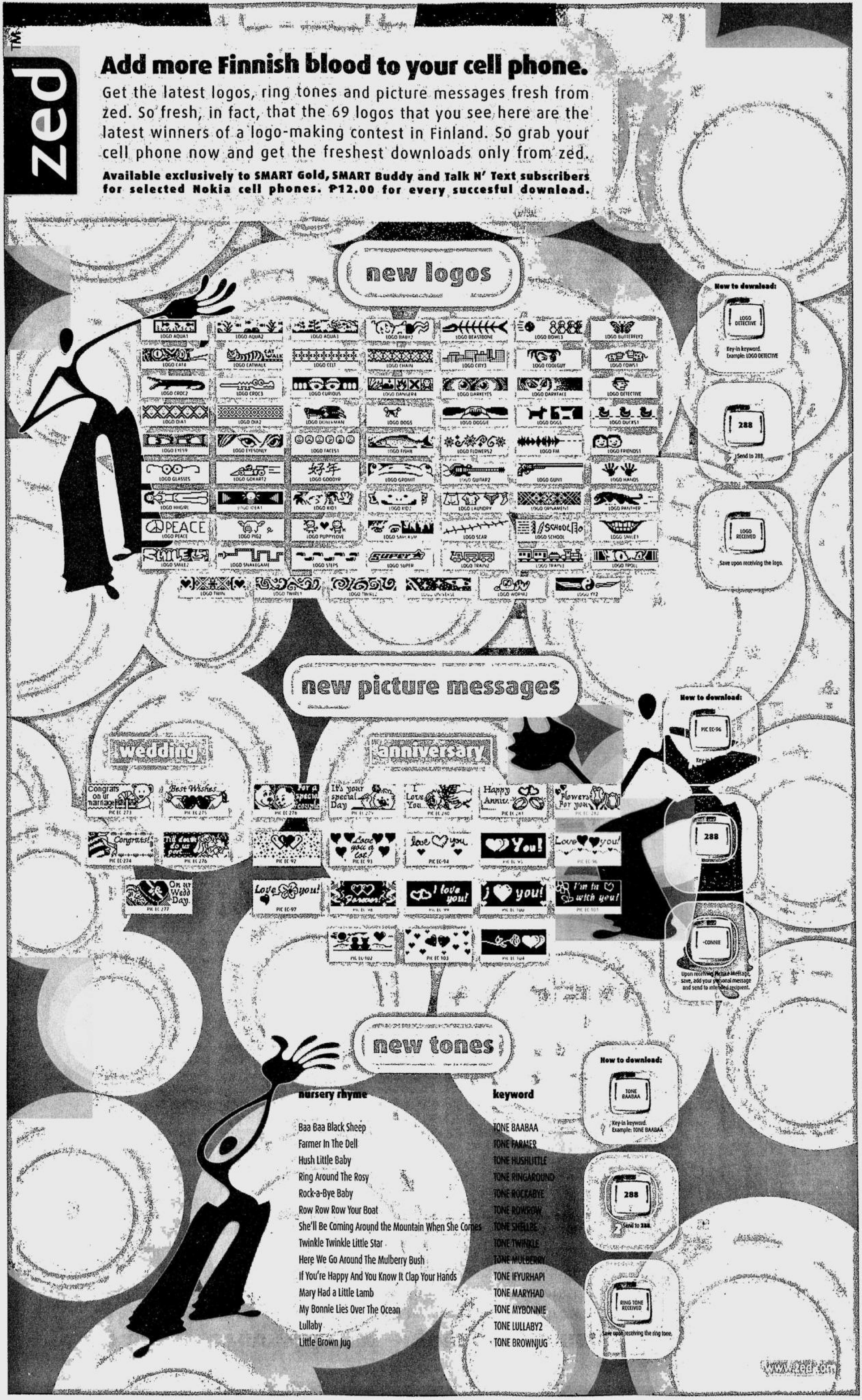
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Ring Around The Rosy	TONE RINGAROUND
Rock-a-Bye Baby	TONE ROCKABYE
Row Row Row Your Boat	TONE ROWROW
She'll Be Coming Around the Mountain When She Comes	TONE SHELLBE
Twinkle Twinkle Little Star	TONE TWINKLE
Here We Go Around The Mulberry Bush	TONE MULBERRY
If You're Happy And You Know It Clap Your Hands	TONE IFYURHAPI
Mary Had a Little Lamb	TONE MARYHAD
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Bangko Sentral keeps rates steady

By Clarissa S. Batino

THE BANGKO Sentral's policy-making Monetary Board kept its key overnight interest rates unchanged yesterday despite the US Federal Reserve's modest quarter-percentage point rate cut overnight.

The overnight borrowing rate of the Bangko Sentral stands at 9 percent and its lending rate at 11.25 percent.

"The board's decision was guided primarily by emerging risks on the inflation front," the bank said in a statement.

"It would be prudent to wait and see a further moderation in the country's inflation outlook before further adjustments on policy rates."

"Any further cut in the BSP's policy rates could fan inflation, which could constrain the broader objective of achieving a balanced and durable economic recovery," Bangko Sentral Governor Rafael Buenaventura said in a statement.

"The board said that while inflation in the first five months had been stable, certain upside risk factors remain," the central bank chief said. Inflation had dropped to 6.5 percent in May from 6.7 percent from February to April.

Buenaventura noted, however, that the BSP had only ruled out any rate cut in the near term and that rates could still fall in the coming months as the peso improves and the threat to inflation is reduced.

He said the quarter-point US rate cut was not as aggressive as previous easings and "signals that the US Fed is scaling back its efforts to stimulate the economy while inflationary pressures remain in check." *(See story on Page B11.)*

The Bangko Sentral's move was widely anticipated by markets as authorities have previously said rates would not be adjusted unless the Fed cut by at least one percentage point.

The bank has said the weakening of the peso on political jitters and the hostage crisis in the south mitigate against further easing of monetary policy.

Buenaventura said earlier yesterday the peso was likely to remain stable after the arraignment of former President Joseph Estrada on Wednesday went through without any violence.

The peso opened at 52.32 to the dollar from Wednesday's close of 52.295. It closed at 52.37.

The Bangko Sentral has slashed key interest rates by six percentage points since December, after hiking them by four percentage points in October to arrest the slide in the peso, reeling on allegations that then President Estrada had amassed illegal wealth during his 31-month term.

The last half-percentage-point cut in benchmark interest rates was on May 18.

Meanwhile, Buenaventura stressed the need for banks to bring down their lending rates even further to encourage people to start borrowing and help spur economic growth.

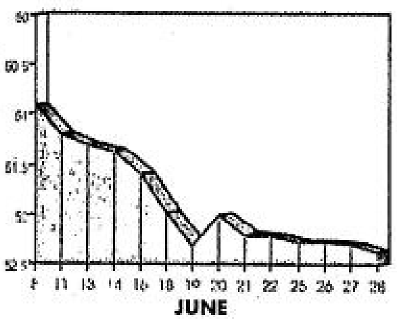
He said bank lending rates were not yet low enough. On the average, nonprime lending rate must only be three to four percentage points over the 91-day treasury bill rate.

Banks price their loans based on the 91-day treasury bill rate which, in turn, tracks the movement of the central bank's overnight rates. Buenaventura pointed out that the 91-day rate last week was already lower than the BSP's 9-percent overnight borrowing rate.

INDICATORS

CURRENCIES

PESO - DOLLAR



Peso-Dollar Rate

P52.37 = $1
As of 5 p.m., June 28, 2001

¥124.54 = $1
The US dollar was trading at 124.54 as of 5 p.m., June 28, 2001

GOLD:$271.10/271.60
per ounce Hong Kong, June 28, 2001

GRAPHICS BY ROBERT B. ANDRES

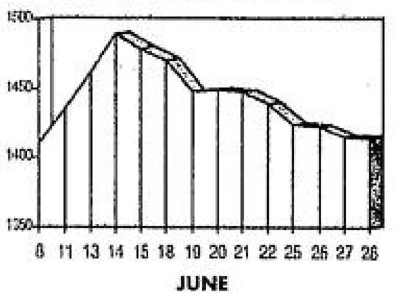
STOCK MARKET

Stocks down

THE LOCAL stock market yesterday failed to get any relief from the 25-basis point cut in interest rates sanctioned by the US Federal Reserve last night, as the main-share index tumbled for the sixth consecutive trading day.

The 33-share PSE composite index ended 0.94 point lower at 1,414.79 yesterday on turnover of P434 million.

PSE Composite Index



(See stock market report on Page B6)

Creditors spoil Clark-Mimosa casino deal

By Gil C. Cabacungan Jr.

CREDITOR-BANKS of Mimosa Leisure Estate are questioning a deal hatched by Clark Development Corp. (CDC) and Mondragon chair Antonio Gonzales for the re-opening of the Mimosa Regency Casino under the management of the Philippine Amusement and Gaming Corp. (Pagcor).

AsiaTrust Banking Corp. vice president Julian Roseus told the INQUIRER that the "unsecured" creditor banks were disappointed that Mondragon's creditors were left out in the discussions for the casino's reopening.

"We knew nothing about the deal and we only learned of the deal in a press statement (Thursday). We have a right to be involved in those discussions because we have sunk a considerable amount of money in the project," Roseus said. The creditor banks are scheduled to meet today to discuss their next move.

Roseus said the creditor-banks wanted the CDC to clarify the term of the deal, particularly the profit-sharing scheme crafted by CDC and Gonzales. Under the deal, Pagcor would get 75 percent of the profits during the one-year interim period; CDC would get 12.5 percent; Mondragon's secured creditor banks would get 6.25 percent, and Mondragon and unsecured creditors, 6.26 percent.

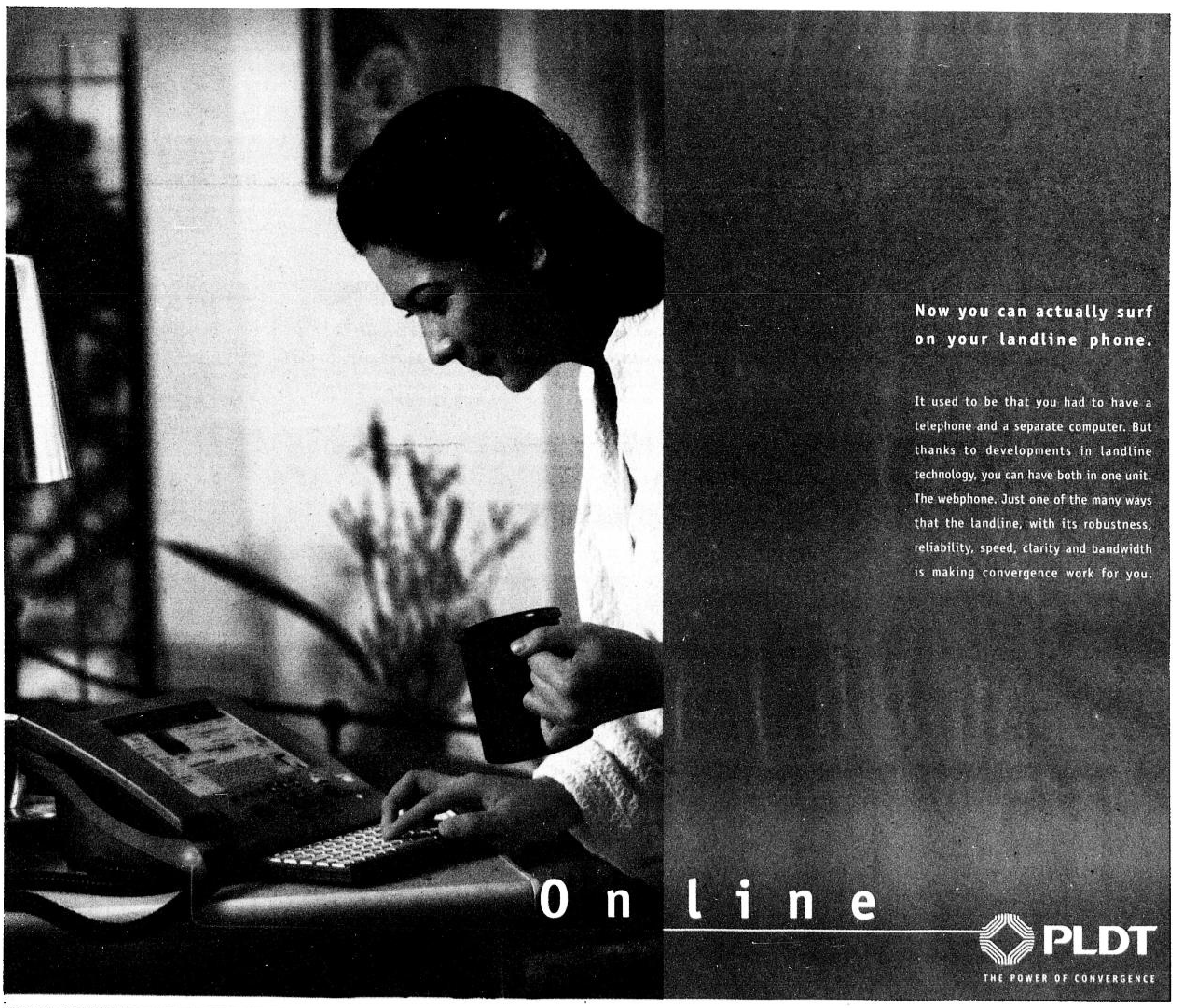
The critics of the deal said the contract was particularly hazy on the share of the 20 banks with unsecured loans worth P2 billion to Mondragon. Also, critics noted that the deal did not address the repayment of Mondragon's debts that included P3 billion worth or secured loans owed to 10 banks.

Roseus noted that the government should give more importance to the interest of the banks than Gonzales because the leasehold rights of Mondragon on the Mimosa estate have already lapsed.

Critics of the deal questioned the government's decision to give Gonzales a share of the profits from the casino when the former tourism secretary has not yet settled his P500 million in back rentals, taxes and fees owed to CDC.

The CDC announced yesterday that it would reopen the Mimosa Regency Casino at Clark under Pagcor management today or more than three years after it was forcibly closed due to Gonzales' failure to live up to his investment commitments and mounting obligations.

CDC sold the re-opening was only temporary while Mondragon scouts for a suitable investor to take over and run the 215-hectare Mimosa Leisure Estate.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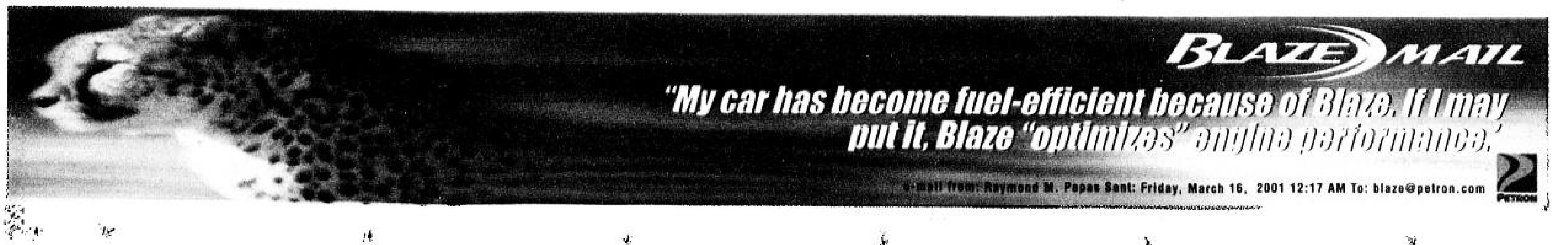
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Sarap mag-BIR

BREAKTIME

Conrado R. Banal III

NOW that the peso exchange rate is behaving, threatening to calm down the business sector, out comes some other disheartening news.

Thanks to the judiciary, which, by the way, does not need any reform, unlike Congress and the Executive, which are full of crooks.

Anyway, the regional trial court in Quezon City just said that BIR Commissioner Rene Bañez is a, er, criminal. Well, the court said that he violated the law.

How dare he change the assignments of his own people in the bureau to different positions! It's now against the law, it seems to me, to do your job!

* * *

LAST month, you see, Bañez simply did what all other BIR heads before him did many, many times. He reshuffled the so-called revenue district officers. Yes, the famous RDOs.

Those, I am told, are the BIR positions to go to court for—even against your own boss. RDOs are the most sought-after people in BIR. I can only wonder why.

As I said, Bañez assigned a number of those district heads from different parts of the country to the BIR main office. Expectedly, they rejected their new assignments.

To show how peace-loving they were, they hauled their own boss to court. The nerve of this Bañez! Doesn't he know they already bought the rights over their positions?

Boldly, they claimed that their new reassignments "would inevitably result in great and irreparable damage and injury" to them. No more good time, guys!

* * *

THE COURT order said that Bañez must now keep status quo. Meaning, simply, those RDOs stay in their posts, while the trial goes on. It can last who knows how long.

To bankers and corporate executives I talked to, therefore, the order is another disheartening news. To them, it is another clear setback for this cute administration.

For one, it can sink down further the mood in business. It was already put down by the Abu Sayyaf, the rise in crime rate, and the drop in the peso's value. Now this!

The order can send the wrong signal to both taxpayers and tax collectors. Look, the BIR commissioner cannot even pinch the RDOs. Yipiii! Fiesta time once again!

To think that Bañez's orders from Gloriaetta herself only happens to be, well, he must do a miracle. He must raise more money. In BIR collection, in short, no status quo!

* * *

YET the same Quezon City court threw out the window all the arguments of those very same RDOs. For instance, they claimed their reassignments were a demotion.

The court noted that, as RDOs, they do work in the "regional" level. In their new assignments, they work in the "national" level. Whadayano, it's even a promotion!

Thus the court quoted the Supreme Court: "A public office is a public trust, and it is not the private preserve of any person." Or even of any animal, for that matter.

I don't know, but it seems to me that the Supreme Court was saying that nobody but nobody could ever buy any rights over any position in the government and the BIR!

Also, the oppressed, aggrieved, maltreated, persecuted RDOs claimed that this Bañez even had no permission from the Department of Finance for the reshuffle.

On which the court issued a rather extensive order when it said, "wrong!" Bañez would only need finance's okay for new rules and regulations—not for doing his job.

* * *

TO TOP it all, the court even affirmed all the positions of Bañez. For instance, why couldn't the RDOs go to the Civil Service Commission for administrative remedies?

In effect, the court said, okay, Bañez was correct, because the law really requires government personnel to exhaust administrative remedies before going to court.

Nevertheless, it also said that the RDOs needed "plain, speedy and adequate remedy." Hmm. Shall we take it that you can get such from our courts today? We shall.

If the court threw away the case, the poor RDOs would indeed incur "great and irreparable damage and injury." And we already wondered what that meant.

There, the poor RDOs did not raise any valid point, while Bañez was correct all along. So how did the poor RDOs win the so-called status quo? Meaning, "Yehey!"

* * *

WHAT did Bañez in, it turns out, was something which I thought did not have anything to do with the price of eggs in China—mainland or otherwise. It's about the Comelec.

It seems that to do his work to raise more money for the government, Bañez must first ask permission from the Comelec. I am not kidding! The law says so.

It's part of the so-called election ban. The government cannot do anything that can influence the votes, including filling positions in the government.

All right, so Bañez got permission from the Comelec to do his job. He obtained an exemption from the supposed ban. The Comelec already "resolved" to grant it.

But the court noticed that the

BREAKTIME/ B4

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(LGRA-GASP)

MESSAGE

To all FortuneCare members and employees, a warm greeting!

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To all the winners of the Annual Sales Award, congratulations and may others be inspired by what you have achieved, for yourselves and for the company in the name of service and production.

Thank you all and God bless!

J. ANTONIO A. CABANGON JR.
President

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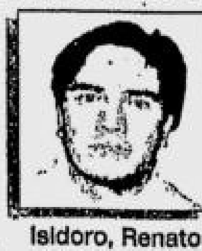
Account Executive of the Year



Isidoro, Renato
(VA-HO-DIV. 1)

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But this notion has since become a thing of the past as thousands of Filipinos today have become card-bearing members of Health Maintenance Organizations (HMOs), affirming the acceptance of managed health care as a basic necessity.

FortuneCare Laboratories are installed with the most up-to-date equipment giving the company the edge within the industry

The credit in making HMOs as accepted as it is today is mostly given to Fortune Medicare Inc. or FortuneCare, a pioneer in the health insurance industry. To mark its 16th year of providing health care to a broad segment of the population this 29th of June, FortuneCare will have simple ceremonial rites at its head office at the Citystate Center building along Shaw Boulevard, Pasig City.

As a leading HMO, FortuneCare responds to the health needs of its members nationwide. Among them are the public school teachers, officers, staff and members of the House of Representatives, officers and service crew of food business and other enterprises, staff of local government units and government agencies and other individual members, families, groups, and private corporations.

More accessible than ever.

To achieve its corporate aim of uplifting the quality of human life by providing affordable, efficient and accessible healthcare programs, FortuneCare maintains a network of over 1,500 medical and dental specialists and is accredited in more than 250 of the best equipped hospitals and medical centers in most urban centers in the country. Significantly, FortuneCare currently has 13 company-owned clinics, one of which is being erected in Dagupan City and will be operational in August. This is to exclusively attend to the outpatient needs of its members in that region.

And on its 16th Anniversary, FortuneCare is planning to open its 14th branch in Caloocan, to bring its services closer to the members living in that area.

Top-of-the-line facilities and equipment give FortuneCare the edge.

Aside from its accessibility, FortuneCare has become synonymous with quality health care. The company is continuously renovating its clinics and upgrading its medical facilities in order to deliver only the best health care service to its clientele. Its full service clinics are installed with the most modern state-of-the-art facilities and equipment for medical and dental care. Among the sophisticated equipment that are standard in FortuneCare's clinics are the ultra-sound machines, minor operating room facilities, ECG, EENT, laboratory, x-ray and other services.

Adding to FortuneCare's ensemble of sophisticated facilities and equipment is its newly acquired mobile clinic. Equipped with an x-ray machine, the mobile clinic itself is a complete check up unit. Now, companies need not go to FortuneCare clinics for their employees' annual check up.

And as part of upgrading its computerized system, FortuneCare has installed a wide-area network facility and developed a web-enabled application. Its clinics are now linked to its mainframe to provide on-time information needed by doctors to service FortuneCare's clients. This allows fast and accurate information exchange among the members, medical providers, and FortuneCare's clinics and offices.

It comes as good news to all FortuneCare members that with all this real-time information equipped, and its accessibility, FortuneCare's network of medical providers, hospitals and clinics, renders the best health care services available in the market today.

The FortuneCare mobile clinic is equipped with an x-ray machine making it fit for servicing full physical examination.

Light at the end of the tunnel

COCKTALES

By Victor
C. Agustin

THE MALAMPAYA field is scheduled to start producing natural gas by Oct. 1. If all goes well, the offshore rig should start commercial production by Jan. 1, 2002, which should translate to about $10 billion in 20 years in foreign exchange earnings for the government.

A good way to start the year, indeed, no matter what your political inclination is.

We are citing this piece of good news to those of you who may have their faith in this country shaken by a barrage of Abu Sayyaf, Edsa III, and kidnapping stories.

While the initial earnings for the Philippine government may be modest, anywhere from $100 million to $150 million for the first three to five years (the bulk of the earnings being earmarked to pay for $2 billion worth of equipment sunk in by Shell, the well operator), the real kicker for the economy is the 25-percent immediate savings in crude importation bill once Malampaya gets underway.

You do the math. The country currently imports 380,000 barrels of crude oil a day at about $26 a barrel. At current crude oil prices, the 25-percent savings should amount to $2.47 million a day or $901.55 million in a year.

That should also ease up pressure on the peso-dollar exchange rate, with the country no longer having to scrounge for a billion dollars annually to pay for crude oil importation.

An added bonus, one which is hardly known outside the petroleum industry, is that Shell has struck crude oil in Malampaya as well.

According to Shell spokesperson Rey Gamboa, the oil field will start pumping liquid gold at 20,000 to 30,000 barrels a day starting in November. Their current estimate is that the oil field will be good up to six months, but the Shell engineers are not discounting the possibility that the field may be larger and more productive than what their initial studies indicate.

Cheaper by the agent

THE MANILA office of Northwest Airlines has been advertising its new Web-based ticketing facility, even offering as much as 4,000 bonus miles to anyone intrepid enough to give out details of his credit card over the Internet to purchase a ticket.

The electronic ticket facility, as structured in the United States, should enable the customer to avail of lower ticket prices since the airline supposedly saves money by removing the middleman and related labor costs.

Strangely, that is not so with the local Northwest e-facility.

For example, for the business class roundtrip fares, Manila to East Coast departing Monday (one year validity), www.nwa.com/ph quotes prices ranging from $3,697.60 to as high as $3,976.10. And these prices are supposed to have already been discounted by 20 percent.

Do you know how much you can get the same ticket from your travel agent? A little over $2,700. That's $1,000 cheaper than the cheapest offered by the supposed seamless electronic ticketing system.

Even the advertised "June specials" listing economy-class prices, at $899 roundtrip to the West Coast (return Manila by end of this month), are on the high side, admitted a Northwest spokesperson.

The spokesperson said the rates quoted in the company website are "rack" rates and that, indeed, it would be cheaper for customers to buy their tickets from the travel agents. In addition, the e-tickets are priced higher precisely to "protect" the travel agents, so went the explanation.

(Tip: If you are on the lookout for cheap airline tickets to the United States and would not mind traveling cattle class, one cargo company, Johnny Air Cargo, is offering half-fare round trip "courier" tickets to New York. In exchange, you surrender your check-in luggage allowance in favor of Johnny Air's.)

Lobbying for himself

LOBBYIST Phil Kaplan is still working behind the scenes meeting with Trade Secretary Manuel Roxas II and key Macapagal-Arroyo officials trying to have his contract extended for at least a year.

The former charges d'affaires of the US Embassy

COCKTALES/ B7

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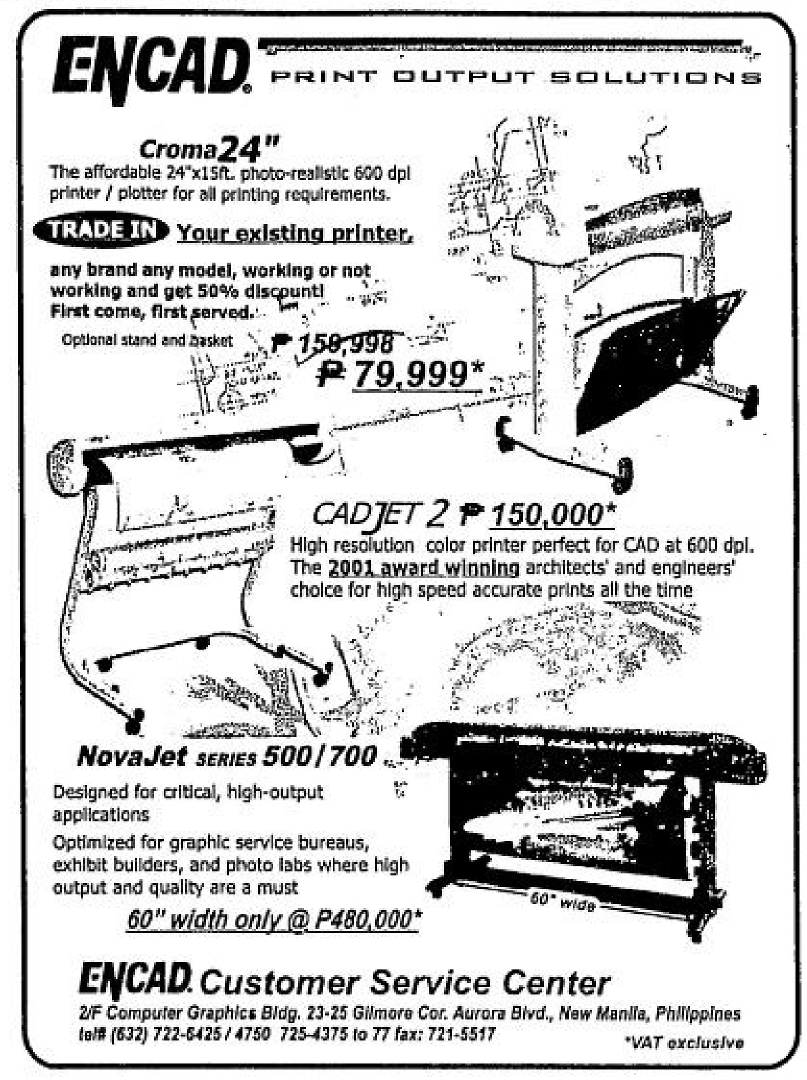

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SIA'S KRISWORLD: BRINGING IN-FLIGHT ENTERTAINMENT TO THE NEXT LEVEL

"In-flight entertainment" used to just mean browsing through in-flight magazines or playing Solitaire. Children, on the other hand, used to content themselves with coloring books or – to the chagrin of parents and other passengers alike – amuse themselves by running up and down the aisles.

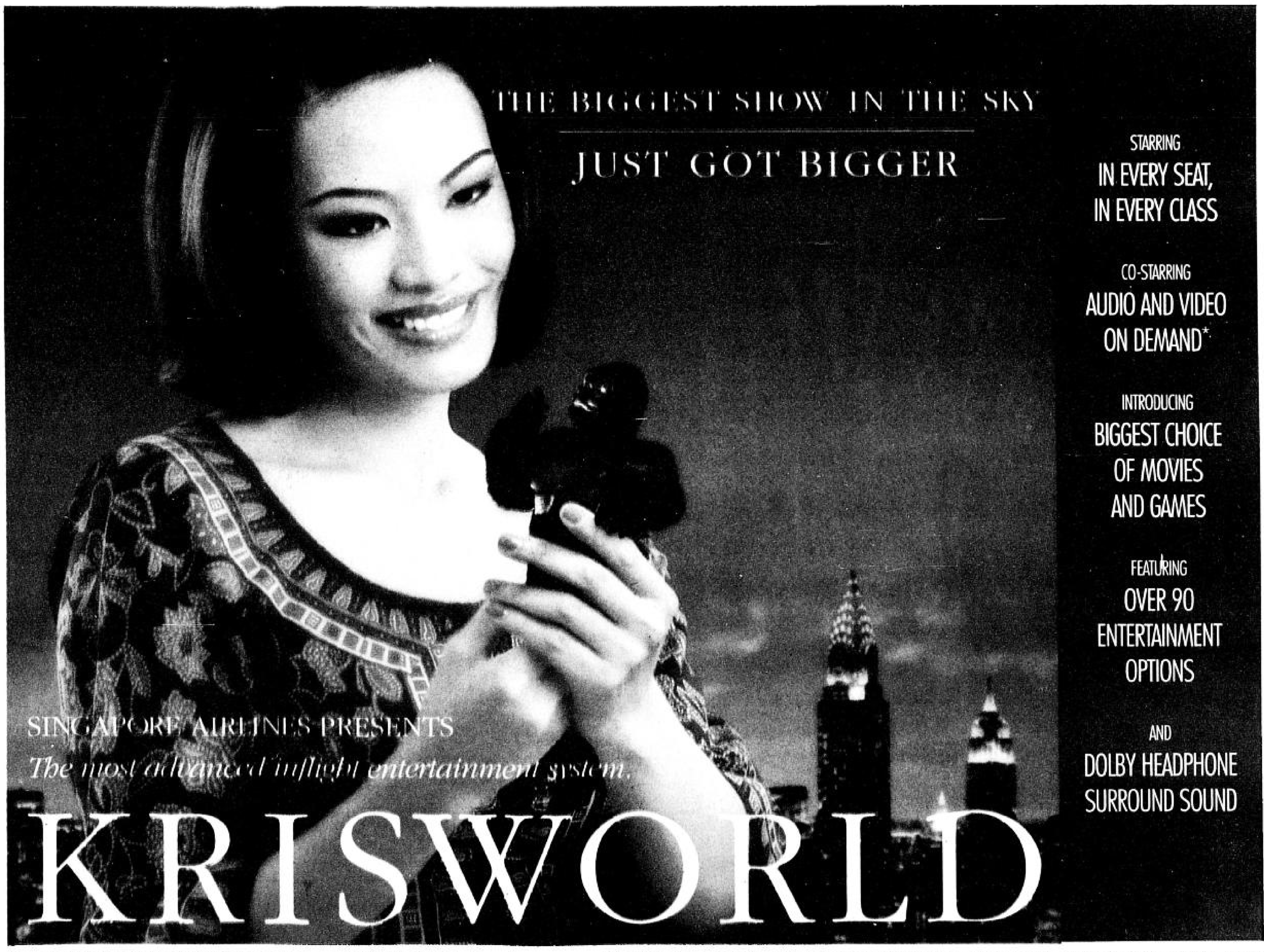
With Singapore Airlines' KrisWorld, however, in-flight fun is brought to the next level. The airline not only uses the very latest in state-of-the-art technology, it also now offers passengers a wider variety of entertainment features to choose from -- 90, to be exact. These include the latest Hollywood blockbuster movies – in DVD quality at that – as well as television hits, interactive games, the widest selection of music, and satellite news.

With KrisWorld, passengers can now play multi-player network PC games with other passengers no matter where they are seated, including Nintendo games (currently with 25 titles, including popular Pokemon titles). This should be great news for parents who constantly worry about their children getting restless and fretful especially on long flights.

KrisWorld also now features *Wisemen*, SIA's audio and video on-demand system, on all three classes. Through *Wisemen*, SIA makes available to customers the widest choice of audio and video programmes in the air. So whether they are on First, Raffles or New Economy Class, passengers on SIA can now sit back and enjoy watching over 50 of their favorite hit movies or listen to over 100 CD albums in the comforts of their own seats. All KrisWorld headsets are also provided with Dolby surround sound quality, so no matter what the sound effects are -- be it the swirling wind of a hurricane, bullets whizzing past, or even the resounding echoes in a canyon – the Dolby headsets contribute tremendously to the enjoyment of a movie.

What's more, every passenger's KrisWorld handset doubles as personal in-seat telephone. KrisFone allows passengers to make calls to virtually anywhere in the world, via a global satellite network. They can also make seat-to-seat calls free of charge. With KrisFone, passengers can call a loved one, close a business deal or make a dinner reservation, anywhere in the world...at the touch of a button.

Enjoy KrisWorld while being pampered by the other aspects of Singapore Airlines' renowned in-flight service – choice of gourmet meals, free-flowing champagne, and relaxing seats. Let Singapore Airlines bring you to your destination the best – and most entertaining way –they can.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A STAR ALLIANCE MEMBER

Health firm cashes in on RP's fitness fever

BY TINA ARCEO-DUMLAO

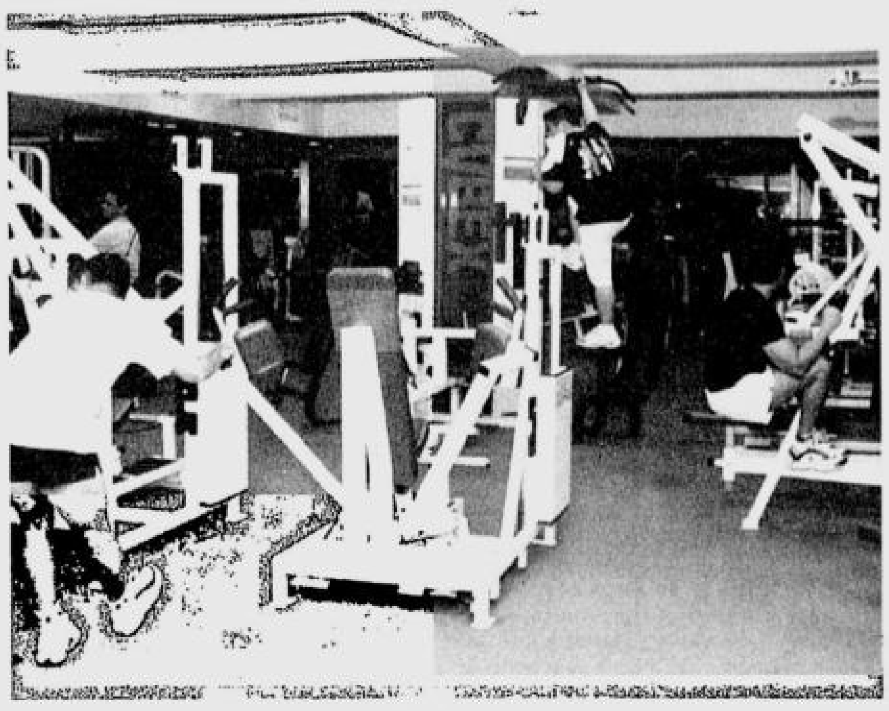
SUCCESS STORY

SOME businessmen think that all they need to put up a fitness center are several treadmills and weights, an area for aerobics, sauna and some shower stalls—and voila! They can cash in on the exercise and health craze.

Not so for Clark Hatch Fitness Centers, which believe a fitness center is more than just a place with exercise equipment.

Back in 1976, when aerobics was not even a part of the vocabulary, American fitness buff Clark Hatch came to the Philippines and established his first fitness center in Makati. That was 11 years after he opened his very first fitness center in Tokyo in 1965.

At the time, the fitness-center concept was something new in the Philippines and it took a while before Hatch even considered expanding, Clark Hatch country manager Bernie Durkin told the INQUIRER.



AFTER 25 years, Clark Hatch is looking forward to doing more business here.

Health craze

Before Clark Hatch, most of the fitness centers were run by bodybuilders, and people went there to develop muscles and nothing more. Health buffs were not really part of the gym crowd.

Fitness became the rage in the country only in the last decade. Because it took a while before the local market caught on with the health craze, Clark Hatch put up a second center at the Hotel Intercon only in 1993, a full 17 years from the time it opened its first one at the Olympia near the Manila Peninsula.

"Since Clark Hatch catered only to a small market, there was really no need to expand until the market grew rapidly over the past 10 years. Since 1993, four stores were opened, with three centers in Davao, Iloilo and Cagayan de Oro," Durkin said.

He said Hatch had the same experience in Thailand in 1980, when he operated only one center in Bangkok for seven years. When people started thinking more about taking care of themselves, the Clark Hatch centers mushroomed. Now, there are eight in Bangkok and one in a Thai province.

Rewards

Being the first has its rewards. Clark Hatch was able to develop lasting relationships with its members, who were its best advertisers. Some members had been with Clark Hatch since the start and brought in their families and friends to the fold.

Clark Hatch also claimed to have introduced the concept of operating a fitness center for those who just wanted to stay fit and healthy, not necessarily to be the next Arnold Schwarzenegger.

"Because Clark Hatch developed a reputation for having good facilities and quality service, his reputation kind of preceded him, and it was quite easy for him to establish centers in the market," Durkin said.

Clark Hatch currently operates 50 fitness centers across Southeast Asia, either in tony residential areas or five-star hotels.

Hatch, who is now in his 60s, has semi-retired from the business, but he still makes it a point to attend the annual managers' meeting to keep himself up to date.

Customer loyalty

Durkin attributed customer loyalty to Clark Hatch to the personalized service that the trainers provide their guests. They take time to prepare a program and guide them along their exercise routine.

"Some of the expansive gyms with a lot of treadmills have become something of a production line because they concentrate on volume. We, on the other hand, want as much as possible to help our members in their programs. We want to keep them with us," he said.

Clark Hatch reaches out to potential members primarily through word of mouth and simple advertising, such as the distribution of flyers and ads in the Philippines as well as Korean and Japanese publications.

"But there is nothing that can sell better than personal recommendations from existing members," he said.

Still growing

With the fitness craze showing no signs of abating, Durkin said Clark Hatch was looking again at the possibility of putting up more fitness centers, preferably outside Makati.

"What we're hoping to do is to look into other areas as soon as things stabilize. This is one of my goals here," Durkin said.

Durkin was confident that Clark Hatch would still be able to attract a good number of members even if there are a lot of fitness centers sprouting like mushrooms all over the country.

"People think the fitness industry is where you can make money easily and quickly. It may be true 15 years ago but not now. It becomes more difficult because of competition. This is why we are relying on our quality of service to grow our members," he said.

Clark Hatch is celebrating its 25th year in the business this year. Clark Hatch is certainly looking forward to at least the next 25.

Privatize and right-size the government

LABOR MANAGEMENT FORUM

Josephus B. Jimenez

AND so, GSIS and SSS executives are getting yearly P10 million in salaries and perks while the P250-daily wage of workers are not even paid punctually. The P250 daily is a far cry from the Wage Commissions' computed living wage of P618.20 a day. How could these public servants, in conscience, face the people with such outrageous salaries while the masses are starving?

The best gift that this administration can bestow upon both labor and management in this God-forsaken country, is to relieve them from the heavy burden of taxation, whose only aim is to fund a government that is not only inept, corrupt and anti-people, but also callously expensive and ostentatious. To do this, the most viable approach is to privatize most of the government's functions and to right-size whatever should remain of it after privatization.

For if the government's main argument in privatizing public corporations is cost-saving and efficiency, then, why limit the privatization frenzy to power generation, oil, water and food? If we could give away Petron to the Arabs and MWSS to Lopez and Ayala, then why should the government not totally sell its holdings in PNB to Lucio Tan, San Miguel and NFA totally to Danding, the LRTs and Skyways to Bolkiah and the public works and public highways to Senator Oreta's husband?

Too big, too corrupt

The privatization syndrome that afflicts GMA as it afflicted FVR, under whose regime Fort Bonifacio was sold, can turn out to be the saving grace to save the nation from ultimate perdition. Indeed, for a third world country with a perennial budget deficit, a fledgling economy that is being exacerbated by an exploding population and an eroding productivity, our bureaucracy is an outrageous monstrosity.

Unreasonably oversized, extremely overmanned and disgustingly inept and graft-ridden, our bureaucracy is a white elephant. Our government executives are not only overpaid, but they are afforded limitless opportunities for corruption. Ostentatious cars, shameless junkets and indecent perks are placed under their control. Too many casuals, contractual, consultants, and 15-30 underlings are sucking blood money from government coffers while eroding public trust instead of creating value for the people.

We have a Congress that has virtually outlived its reason for being, departments with too many undersecretaries, directors and chiefs, who are neither responsive nor accountable. We have a judicial system that is too slow, too expensive and too circuitous and judges, clerks and staff who are neither people-friendly nor service-oriented. Justice is not only delayed, it is often denied.

Abolish Congress

The most irrelevant, least pro-people and extremely expensive branch of the government is Congress. Since the 1987 Constitution, it has miserably failed in its mission. It only succeeded in making multi-millionaires out of senators and congressmen via the much-maligned pork barrel euphemistically called the CDF, at the expense of the overburdened taxpayers. It is the most expensive venue for posturing and obstructionism.

Their multibillion-peso budget can build thousands of schools, hundreds of bridges, miles and miles of highways and millions of medicines for our sick indigents. Its work is no longer necessary because we have an oversupply of laws that are not implemented due to lack of funds. Whatever little legislative works of local application that may remain should be given to municipal and provincial boards. During summer, all presiding officers of these boards can convene in the national level to enact national laws.

Streamline the Cabinet

We have an oversized Cabinet for a country with perennial budget deficits. The giant bureaucracy gives rise to duplication of functions, inter-departmental turf wars and ballooning government expenses. We have more Cabinet members than the US and Canada. For instance, the Departments of Agriculture, Agrarian Reform, Natural Resources and Environment can be integrated.

The Departments of Health, Education, Housing and Social Services can be combined. Trade and industry and finance can be one. Public works, public highways, transportation and communication can be unified. The DILG can be integrated with the DND. Labor and justice can be one. Abolish the posts of too many presidential advisers and dismiss all 15-30 consultants. That will leave us with only five to seven departments. This will save us about P100 billion a year, which can buy houses for our squatters, food for our starving millions and medical care for the old, the sick and the injured. Integrate the SSS and GSIS and give it to statesmen like Ting Paterno, Justice Feria and Maning Pelaez to run, shielding it from politics and corruption.

Reform the judiciary

We need only five justices of the Supreme Court. Let us abolish the Court of Appeals and integrate the regional with the city and municipal courts. By then, our judicial system will only have two levels—the trial levels and the appeals levels. Let us remove from the jurisdiction of courts petty disputes and develop the Barangay Justice system and the new modes of conciliation, mediation and voluntary arbitration. Let us give judges only 30 days to decide the cases without extension or postponement.

This way, we will speed up decision-making, lower litigation costs and save the taxpayer's money. Give justices and judges written exams harder than the Bar prior to their appointment and promotion, straighten the Judicial Academy and raise the salaries to levels thrice higher than today's senators for justices and twice higher than today's congressmen for judges. Then make graft in the judiciary punishable with death by musketry.

Yes, the best gift this administration can offer the people is to remove from their shoulders the yoke of a heavy and virtually irrelevant bureaucracy. If food, water, oil and power can be contracted out, why not privatize the government?

(For comments, you can reach the writer at the following e-mail address: josephus.jimenez@pcppi.com.ph.)

Subic-based company targets China's e-commerce market

BY ELIZABETH MARCELO
PDI Central Luzon Desk

SUBIC BAY FREEPORT—A Filipino application service provider will launch within the next two months a portfolio of web-based marketing solutions aimed at cornering a chunk of China's E-commerce volume, which is expected to surge from $9.33 billion to $82 billion by 2004.

Through China-entrepot.com, the Alfox Group will venture into on-line marketing services and transshipment operations that will give Chinese companies access to a vast network of suppliers and buyers worldwide and enable them to conduct transactions online.

Alfredo Ongyanco, Alfox president and chief executive officer, announced the "China Entrepot" project after signing a lease agreement with the Subic Bay Metropolitan Authority (SBMA).

Alfox is establishing the country's first online property brokerage to be based in Subic—the Internet Property Broker Corp. (IPBC).

"Entrepot" is the French word for warehouse or trading center. This is exactly what China-entrepot.com will be—a global trading hub for products made in China that have yet to break into the global market.

While China has become the world's manufacturing center, its trade practices and laws can be cumbersome, if not frustrating, for those reared in the business ways of the free world.

Direct export transactions are prohibited. Manufacturers have to either obtain a license to export—by no means an easy task—or course their deals through state export agencies.

Export agencies, however, handle too many products and most of the products are beyond their core of competencies.

To cope with the system, some importers like JC Penny have put up buying stations in China. But smaller importers, particularly those from developing countries, seek help from Hong Kong intermediaries.

What the Hong Kong intermediaries do is pool the orders into a volume acceptable to manufacturers. Export orders have to be in big bulk to merit disruption of the manufacturing schedules.

China has a built-in market of 1.4 billion consumers. Chinese manufacturers consider it better to serve domestic demand more than the export market.

With China's entry into the World Trade Organization and state efforts at trade reforms and modernization of business, the advent of the Internet has ushered in a marketing solution.

Portals like chinamet.com, made-in-china.com, sparkice.com, chinamedia.org, globalsource.com and alibaba.com provide web presence, web hosting and product listing.

However, outside China, not many people are aware of these portals.

They are tagged in Chinese and are therefore "unsearchable," even through powerful search engines like the Yahoo!

Foreign buyers have to go to China to know that the portals and the products they carry do exist.

Through China-entrepot.com, businesses in China will finally have access to a portal that has both Chinese and English versions.

They can also access call center services that address the language problem, browser-based capability to create a basic e-store in five minutes and a full-featured customizable storefront in a few hours, marketing and promotion worldwide, and a 24-hour store administration.

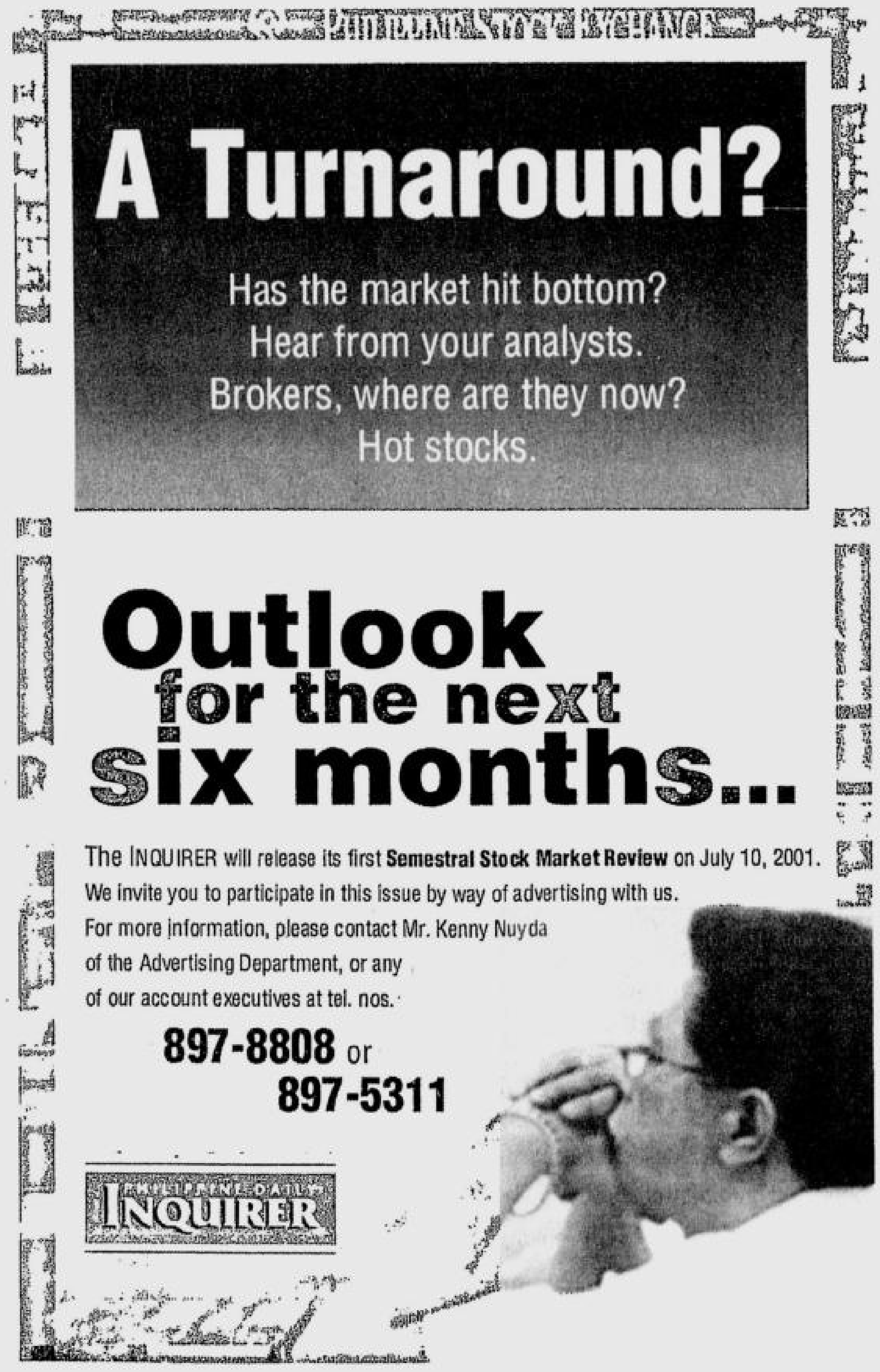
SBMA Chair Felicito Payumo noted that what makes China-entrepot.com vital to Chinese businesses and distinct from other ASPs, is the "large pool of Filipino talents with marketing savvy, who have worked in multinational companies and are experienced in Western-type advertising, packaging and fulfillment management."

He said these talents "can satisfactorily blend East-West culture in doing business."

He also expressed confidence in the capacity of Alfox "to understand the intricate trading practices in China and gain direct and immediate access to the right parties."

Alfox has formed a partnership with the Guangdong Yellow Pages for the development of China Entrepot as an e-commerce gateway for Chinese businesses wanting to connect to the rest of the global village.

Ongyanco declined to give the exact figure, saying only that up to this stage, Alfox has put in less than P100 million for the project.



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PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER

Breaktime

(From page B2)

Comelec gave Bañez a couple of conditions, such as he must submit data and information on the reassignments. This he also did.

So what did Bañez do or not do that made him a criminal, as he violated the law? According to the court, he should have gotten another approval from the Comelec.

Let me see if I got it: After the Comelec already "resolved" to give the exemption, as long as Bañez submitted the data, in effect the exemption was not yet given. Is that it?

* * *

BLINDSIDED seems to be what happened to Bañez. The damaged and injured RDOs did not say a word about the Comelec exemption.

Still, it got the star-billing in the order. Heck, it clinched the order.

The order came out last Monday, on June 25. Between us girls, it seems that a lot of BIR personnel knew about the order even before it came out that day.

Last Saturday, or three days before the order came out, I talked to certain BIR people. They told me about the order for status quo. And they told me the main reason.

And it had something to do with the Comelec and the election ban. What were they? Clairvoyants? I don't know. What I know is SMB — sarap mag-BIR!

SSS junks ₱10-B project

By Clarissa S. Batino

A DETERIORATING investment climate has forced the Social Security System and a foreign fund manager to scrap a plan to put up a P10-billion joint-venture company.

The planned venture was junked after the foreign fund manager sought from the SSS a guarantee against political and peace-and-order risks that the state-run pension fund could not give.

The joint venture would have required each party to infuse at least P5 billion. The money would then be invested in local stocks, government securities and possibly, even equities in unlisted companies.

SSS president Vitaliano Nañagas III said earlier that a memorandum of agreement between the SSS and its partner, whom he refused to name, were supposed to be signed this month.

"The plan is somewhat out of the question now," a ranking SSS official said yesterday. Another source, however, stressed that the venture was only put on hold.

Another official explained the foreign fund manager wanted the government to guarantee a return on its investments given the political and peace-and-order risks posed by the Abu Sayyaf hostage crisis.

He said the SSS told its potential partner that the government was no longer keen on giving out guarantees.

The tie-up was meant to give the SSS an opportunity for a technology-transfer venture. The foreign partner was supposed to serve as a custodian and help expand the earnings potential of the SSS.

An analyst said the foiled SSS venture was just another instance of foreign investors shying away from the Philippines because of dim growth prospects aggravated by the shaky political and wobbly peace-and-order situation.

Gov't approves ₱2.8-B ferry project

By Doris C. Dumlao

THE INTER-AGENCY Investment Coordination Committee has approved a P2.8-billion ferry network project for the Visayas.

In a statement, the National Economic and Development Authority said the approval of the first phase of the roll-on, roll-off ferry network project would result in shorter travel time and cheaper cargo handling costs in the Visayas.

Neda is the lead ICC agency. ICC is the state overseer of foreign-assisted projects to be implemented in the Philippines.

The P2.8-billion project is part of the 25th Yen Loan package involving seven RORO routes in Bicol, the Visayas and Mindanao. It draws from the 1992 Japanese-assisted Nationwide RORO Transport Study.

Neda said the project would lead to an effective and efficient water transportation system by improving cargo-handling and port capacity.

RORO is a term used to describe a port design that allows easy transport of cargo in and out of a ship or a ferry.

"Benefits of the RORO Ferry Network Project include faster vessel loading; higher market value of goods due to more efficient transport of high-value perishable agricultural products; and, reduced cost of port development," Neda said.

The ferry project has been classified as a high priority based on the criteria under the Sectoral Effectiveness and Efficiency Review of Neda and the Department of Budget and Management.

SEER is a system of identifying government priorities and is one of the components of the medium-term expenditure framework, which aims to instill greater predictability and discipline in the agencies' investment programming functions.

The ICC also announced a new scheme to speed up the implementation of foreign-assisted projects.

Pursuant to a directive from the ICC chair, Finance Secretary Jose Isidro Camacho, all projects presented to the ICC will now be reviewed against the multi-year budget allocation of their respective proponent agencies to avoid problems associated with delayed implementation.

The budget department, as agreed upon during a Development Budget Coordination Committee meeting, shall, henceforth, issue the medium-term expenditure ceilings for each agency and shall provide the ICC with full agency budget analysis for every project presented for ICC approval.

INQUIRER business reporter Elena R. Torrijos accepts a plaque from the Center for Media Freedom & Responsibility. Torrijos was among the finalists for the Jaime V. Ongpin Awards for Investigative Journalism. With her are CMFR's Maribel Ongpin and former Sen. Vicente Paterno.

RCBC sees higher remittance

By Elena R. Torrijos

RIZAL Commercial Banking Corp. plans to open 15 to 20 new overseas remittance offices by year's end to increase its remittance business by 25 percent.

RCBC chief executive Alfonso Yuchengco III said Monday that RCBC would open remittance offices in the United States, Europe and Asia.

The bank has already set up remittance offices in Italy, Vienna and the Netherlands. It has plans to open additional offices in Hawaii, Chicago and Las Vegas in the United States, and in Hong Kong and Taiwan.

RCBC last year handled close to $600 million in remittances largely from overseas Filipino workers, Yuchengco said.

The bank posted a 25-percent growth in its remittance business in the first quarter from the same period last year, keeping it on track to meeting its full-year growth target.

Yuchengco earlier projected the bank would likely register a minimum 20-percent profit growth this year over last year's P370 million.

He said the expected earnings growth would be a result of the low interest environment and the stabilization of the bank's level of bad loans.

RCBC, one of the country's top 10 largest banks, posted a first-quarter profit of P140 million, 30 percent over last year's net income for the same period.

Yuchengco said RCBC was in discussions with various foreign groups, including Deutsche Bank AG, for the sale of a new company that would hold certain bad loans and acquired assets of the bank.

The talks, however, were preliminary and no prospective investor had yet to conduct a due diligence on the bad assets of the bank.

Yuchengco said RCBC's non-performing loan ratio, or percentage of soured loans to total loans, stood at 17 percent.

$200-M loan out in Oct.

ENERGY Secretary Vincent Perez said Tuesday the $200-million portion of a $600-million power sector reform loan from the Asian Development Bank and Japan Bank of International Cooperation would be released in October.

Perez told reporters the money would be released following the approval last month of the power reform law.

The $200-million loan was supposed to be released in June last year, but it was withheld when Congress failed to pass a law to restructure the local energy sector.

Perez said apart from passing the power reform law, the government was also able to meet other conditions attached to the loan.

These included:

- Identifying National Power Corp.'s projections for its maximum capacity to carry debts;
- Implementation of Napocor's unbundling of tariffs;
- Napocor's compliance with its financial covenants with the ADB;
- Determination of independent power producers' liabilities that cannot be absorbed into Napocor's generation companies;
- Submission of Napocor's privatization plan to the government;
- Permission of Napocor's creditor banks to transfer its liabilities to the Power Sector Assets and Liabilities Management Corp.; and,
- Review of Napocor's billing and metering infrastructure.

"The submission of Napocor's privatization plan to the government would require some work," Perez told reporters.

But in an interview earlier this month, Finance Secretary Jose Isidro Camacho said the submission of the plan "will be easy since we have been preparing this for so long."
Ronnel W. Domingo

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New groups eyed to develop Bonifacio business district

By Elena R. Torrijos

BONIFACIO Land Corp., a subsidiary of Metro Pacific Corp., plans to sell its rights to develop the northern central business district of the Bonifacio Global City.

The northern CBD is located north of S&R Price Club up to the Kalayaan gate of Fort Bonifacio and adjacent to the University Park where three major international schools are located.

In a statement, MPC said BLC's initiative will accelerate work on Bonifacio Global City's undeveloped areas while allowing the group to concentrate on its ongoing and future vertical developments within the Big Delta and expanded Big Delta areas.

Under the terms of the proposed sale, Fort Bonifacio Development Corp., a joint-venture between BLC and the Bases Conversion Development Authority, will inject 18.9 hectares of land, representing the northern CBD, into a separate wholly owned company. BLC, which is 67.5-percent owned by MPC, has development rights over 55 percent of the land while BCDA, a government agency, holds the rights over the balance of 45 percent.

BLC is inviting strategic investors such as large, well-capitalized developers or groups to participate in the development of the identified area through the acquisition of its 55-percent development rights.

In the statement, MPC president and chief executive Ricardo Pascua said the sale of development rights would enable the MPC group to strengthen its balance sheet and concentrate on major future projects within the Bonifacio Global City.

Pascua said the sale would also augment cash flow and long-term restructuring income.

"By enabling substantial developer access to the heart of the Bonifacio Global City, we will accelerate development and attainment of critical mass, which is essential in a project of this scale and magnitude," he said.

FBDC is developing 150 hectares of land in the Bonifacio area straddling Makati and Taguig. In 1996, the company sold P28.4 billion worth of land inventory and is now developing Big Delta, an area covering 57 hectares in the southwest quadrant of the site.

P10-B PDIC EXPOSURE

PNB loan conversion okayed

By Clarissa S. Batino

THE DEPARTMENT of Budget has approved the plan of Philippine Deposit Insurance Corp. to repay the government's P10 billion in liabilities to Philippine National Bank using PDIC's loan given to PNB last October.

PDIC president and concurrent PNB chair Norberto Nazareno said the budget department approved the plan last week and a draft agreement would be signed by the three parties soon.

He explained that it would be PDIC and no longer the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas that would use the loans as payment for government debts to PNB.

"The DBM had approved of the process and they have accepted the fact that these are government obligations. The DBM also assured us that PDIC would be paid through future budget allocations," the PDIC president said in a phone interview.

Nazareno said PNB and the government would still determine the exact amount of state obligations that have become part of the bank's huge non-performing loans.

He said that of the estimated P13.3 billion that PNB had advanced in behalf of the government, only P10 billion has become past due, including about P5 billion in debts of the Bureau of Customs to Swiss imports inspector SGS as well as loans of the sugar trader Nasutra dating back to the time of Marcos.

The PNB chair could not say whether his negotiations with Lucio Tan on the government's plan to re-take control of the ailing lender would be completed within July.

"It is really hard to say when we could wrap up the discussions but I hope it would be soon," Nazareno said.

Nazareno said a P10-billion emergency loan by PDIC to PNB would be used to take out the remaining government debts in the country's sixth largest bank. The BSP also extended P15 billion to PNB.

Part of the P25 billion in combined loans granted to PNB would be converted into government equity that would restore the state's ownership in PNB back to less than 51 percent from 16 percent.

DISCLOSURES

RFM Corp. will hold its annual stockholders' meeting on Aug. 8, 9 a.m. at the auditorium of RFM Corporate Center in Mandaluyong City. Only stockholders as of June 7 are entitled to notice of and to vote at the meeting.

* * *

FAIRMONT Holdings Inc. confirmed it is considering the implementation within the next five months of a P1-billion stock rights offering to finance its venture into mass housing development.

* * *

CENTRAL Azucarera Don Pedro has declared a P0.06 per share cash dividend in favor of stockholders as of July 9 and shall be payable on July 31.

* * *

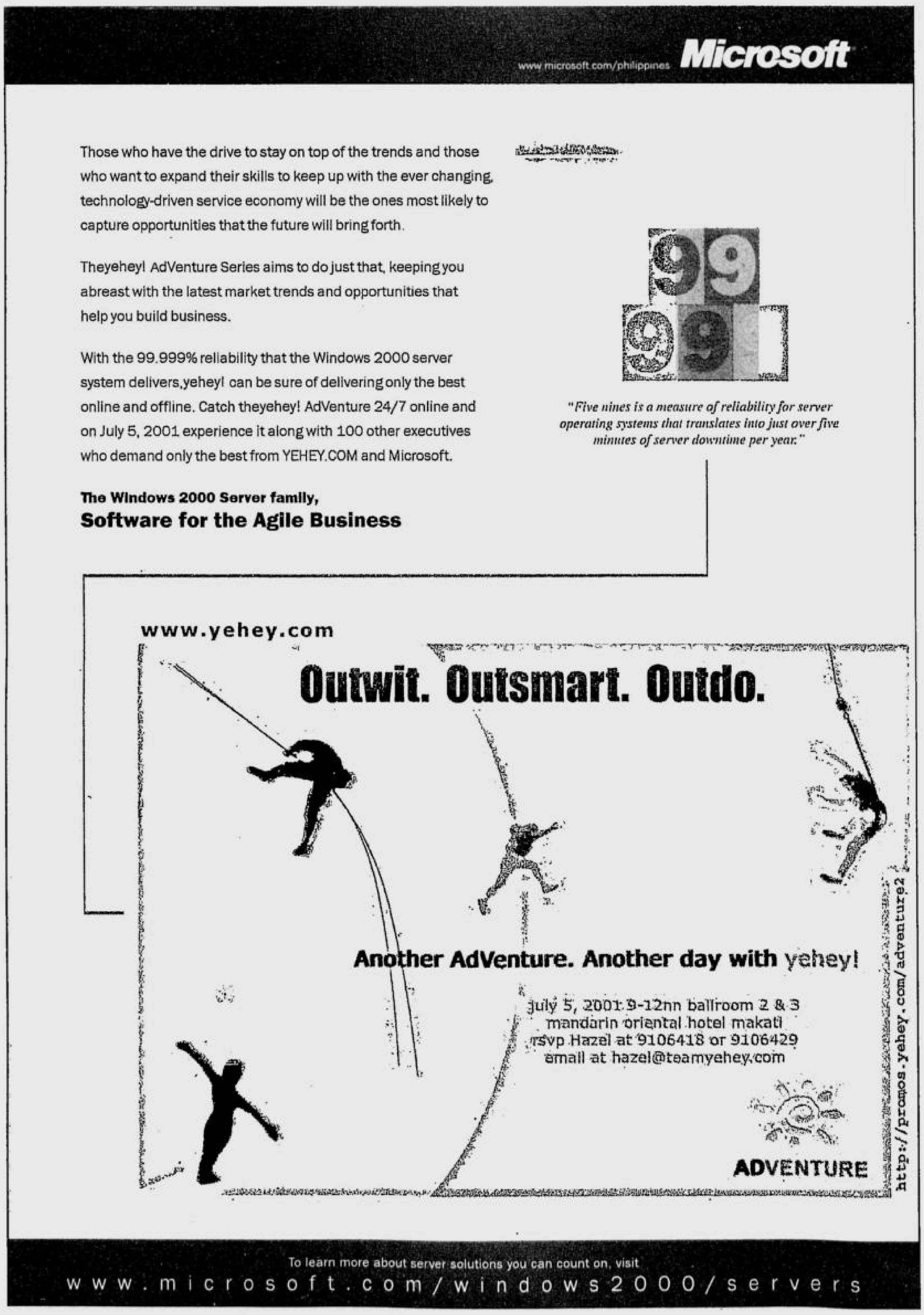
ACTIVE Alliance Inc. postponed its June 29 annual stockholders' meeting and tentatively set Sept. 14 as the new date for the meeting.

* * *

COSMOS Bottling Corp. will hold its annual stockholders' meeting on Aug. 7, 10 a.m. at the auditorium of RFM Corporate Center in Mandaluyong City. Only stockholders as of May 28 are entitled to notice of and to vote at the meeting.

* * *

ELECTED directors of **Southeast Asia Cement Holdings Inc.** were Philip Anthony Roseberg, Arlene de Guzman, Andres Sta. Maria, Jose Ernesto Rodriguez, Duncan Gage, Jean-Dominique Sejourne, Jaime Gonzalez, Benito Araneta and Wigberto Tañada. *Compiled by Maricar D. Tolosa, PDI Research*



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(As of Thursday, June 28, 2001)

STOCKS	OPEN	HIGH	LOW	CLOSE	VOLUME
BANKS & FINANCIAL SERVICES					
BANKS					
Banco Filipino Sav & Mort	100	100	100	100	1,100
Bank of the Phil. Islands	74	74	73.5	74	228,400
China Banking Corp.	610	610	610	610	10
Equitable PCI Bank Inc.	38	38	37.5	37.5	35,200
Metropolitan Bank & Trust	209	210	204	204	364,510
Philippine National Bank	43	43	43	43	21,800
Union Bank of the Phil.	25.5	26	25.5	26	4,700
FINANCIAL SERVICE					
Filipino Fund Inc.	0.33	0.37	0.33	0.37	310,000
First Metro Invest. Corp.	230	240	230	240	500
Manulife Financial Corp.	1350	1350	1350	1350	5,930
Sun Life Financial Serv.	1140	1155	1140	1155	1,860
COMMERCIAL & INDUSTRIAL					
COMMUNICATION					
ABS-CBN Broadcasting Corp.	39.5	39.5	39	39	1,800
Diversified Fin. Network	6.8	6.8	6.8	6.8	1,000
Globe Telecom Inc.	670	670	670	670	9,000
Island Info and Tech Inc.	0.036	0.036	0.036	0.036	400,000
Manila Bulletin Pub. Corp.	3.25	3.5	3.25	3.5	20,000
Phil. Telegraph & Tel. Co.	0.29	0.29	0.29	0.29	10,000
Philstar.Com Inc.	1	1	1	1	20,000
Phil. Long Dis Tel Co.	705	725	705	725	99,900
Ivantage Corp.	0.85	0.85	0.82	0.82	180,000
Philweb.Com Inc.	0.039	0.039	0.038	0.038	46,800,000
POWER & ENERGY					
Manila Electric Co. A	39	39	38.5	38.5	7,400
Manila Electric Co. B	55.5	55.5	54.5	54.5	771,400
Petron Corp.	2.1	2.14	2.1	2.14	1,524,000
Trans-Asia Oil and Energy	0.96	1	0.96	0.96	8,220,000
TRANSPORTATION SERVICES					
Asian Terminals Inc.	1.14	1.14	1.12	1.12	15,000
Int'l Container Term'l Sv	2.42	2.42	2.36	2.36	2,413,000
Negros Navigation Co. Inc.	0.15	0.155	0.15	0.155	80,000
CONSTRUCTION & OTHER RELATEDPRODUC TS					
Engineering Equip. Inc.	0.36	0.36	0.35	0.35	540,000
Republic Glass Hldg. Corp.	1.2	1.2	1.2	1.2	90,000
Union Cement Corp.	1.16	1.22	1.16	1.18	4,070,000
FOOD, BEVERAGES & TOBACCO					
Cosmos Bottling Corp.	4.25	4.6	4.25	4.55	2,068,000
Jollibee Foods Corp.	13.5	13.5	13.5	13.5	2,484,000
La Tondena Distillers Inc.	26.5	27	26.5	27	268,400
RFM Corp.	1.52	1.7	1.52	1.7	5,995,000
San Miguel Corp. A	42	42	41.5	42	10,200
San Miguel Corp. B	47	47.5	46.5	47.5	407,500
Vitarich Corp.	0.5	0.5	0.5	0.5	100,000
HOLDING FIRMS					
Abacus Con Res & Hdg A	0.77	0.77	0.77	0.77	50,000
Ayala Corp.	7.1	7.1	7	7	1,056,000
Aboitiz Equity Ventures	1.44	1.46	1.42	1.46	3,771,000
Alliance Global Group Inc.	10.75	11	10.5	10.75	3,000
Ajo.Net Holdings Inc.	1.2	1.22	1.12	1.16	2,451,000
A. Soriano Corp.	0.52	0.52	0.52	0.52	400,000
Alcorn Gold Res. Corp.	0.0055	0.0055	0.0055	0.0055	6,000,000
Bacnotan Cons Indus Inc.	12.5	12.75	12.5	12.75	9,200
Benpres Holdings Corp.	1.6	1.64	1.58	1.58	2,007,000
Crown Equities Inc.	0.14	0.14	0.14	0.14	1,900,000
DMCI Holdings, Inc.	0.3	0.3	0.28	0.28	6,510,000
Filinvest Dev. Corp.	1.04	1.06	1.04	1.06	250,000
First Phil Hldgs Corp.	27	28	27	28	279,900
Global Equities Inc. G .	2200	.22 .	21 .	21	2,250,000
Guoco Holdings (Phils.)	0.2	0.2	0.2	0.2	80,000
Ionics Inc.	11	11	10.75	10.75	19,200
Ipeople Inc. B	1.1	1.1	1.1	1.1	40,000
J.G. Summit Holdings Inc.	2.1	2.1	2.08	2.08	108,000
Macroasia Corp.	1.46	1.46	1.42	1.42	460,000
Megaworld Corp.	0.75	0.75	0.75	0.75	370,000
Metro Pacific Corp.	0.48	0.48	0.47	0.47	660,000
Solid Group Inc.	0.5	0.5	0.5	0.5	140,000
Tanduay Holdings Inc.	5	5	5	5	4,000
Uniwide Holdings Inc.	0.28	0.28	0.28	0.28	100,000
Wellex Industries Inc.	0.33	0.33	0.33	0.33	30,000
Waterfront Phils. Inc.	0.23	0.24	0.23	0.24	70,000
MANUFACTURING, DISTRIBUTION & TRADING					
Interphil Labs Inc. A	0.82	0.82	0.82	0.82	60,000
Matsushita Elec Phil Corp.	5.2	5.2	5.2	5.2	2,000
Music Corp.	1.9	1.94	1.9	1.92	120,000
Picop Resources Inc.	0.09	0.09	0.09	0.09	100,000
Central Azucar Don Pedro	0.9	0.91	0.9	0.91	170,000
Spi Technologies Inc.	15	15	14.75	14.75	20,000
HOTEL, RECREATION & OTHER SERVICE					
Belle Corp.	0.42	0.44	0.42	0.44	7,490,000
Fairmont Holdings Inc.	0.58	0.58	0.58	0.58	640,000
Premiere Ent. Prod. Inc.	0.33	0.33	0.33	0.33	160,000
Philippine Racing Club	5.1	5.1	5.1	5.1	413,000
BONDS, PREFERRED & WARRANTS					
ABS-CBN Hldgs. Corp. (Pdr)	40	40	40	40	21,000
Globe Telecom Hldg (Pdr)	680	685	680	685	1,600
Jollibee Warrants	13	13	13	13	88,500
Omico Corp. Warrant	0.0024	0.0026	0.0024	0.0026	50,000,000
PLDT (10% Pref) Series V	10.25	10.25	10.25	10.25	1,000
PLDT (10% Pref) Series W	10.25	10.25	10.25	10.25	1,000
PLDT (10% Pref) Series Z	10.25	10.25	10.25	10.25	1,000
Philweb.Com Inc. -Warrants	0.029	0.029	0.027	0.028	37,600,000
PROPERTY					
Ayala Land Inc.	5.4	5.4	5.4	5.4	722,000
Cebu Holdings Inc.	0.39	0.39	0.39	0.39	70,000
C & P Homes Inc.	0.27	0.27	0.25	0.26	4,130,000
Cyber Bay Corp.	0.29	0.29	0.29	0.29	150,000
Empire East Land Inc.	0.32	0.32	0.31	0.31	11,790,000
Edsa Prop. Holdings Inc.	1.38	1.38	1.38	1.38	10,000
Filinvest Land Inc.	2.24	2.26	2.24	2.24	1,099,000
Mrc Allied Ind. Inc.	0.23	0.23	0.21	0.21	450,000
Robinsons Land Corp.	2.02	2.02	2	2	2,050,000
Phil Realty and Holdings	0.11	0.11	0.11	0.11	50,000
SM Prime Holdings Inc.	6.2	6.4	6.2	6.3	6,262,000
Universal Rightfield Prop	0.08	0.08	0.08	0.08	600,000
MINING					
Apex Mining Co. Inc. A	0.0065	0.0075	0.0065	0.0065	13,000,000
Apex Mining Co. Inc B	0.0065	0.0065	0.0065	0.0065	10,000,000
Dizon Copper Silver Mines	1.9	1.9	1.9	1.9	13,000
Itogon-Suyoc Mines A	0.0525	0.0525	0.048	0.0525	64,500,000
Itogon-Suyoc Mines B	0.05	0.0525	0.05	0.0525	3,500,000
Manila Mining Corp. B	0.006	0.006	0.006	0.006	20,000,000
Omico Corp. N	0.004	0.0042	0.004	0.0042	67,000,000
Polar Mines & Dev't Corp.	0.017	0.017	0.016	0.017	2,800,000
Philex Mining Corp. A	0.41	0.41	0.4	0.41	1,840,000
Philex Mining Corp. B	0.42	0.42	0.41	0.42	2,410,000
OIL					
Imperial Res.	0.021	0.021	0.021	0.021	1,000,000
Interport Res.	0.005	0.005	0.005	0.005	2,000,000
Oriental Pet. & Min. A	0.0042	0.0042	0.0042	0.0042	6,000,000
Pacifica	0.015	0.015	0.015	0.015	10,500,000
Vulcan Ind'l	0.15	0.15	0.15	0.15	4,000,000

	SHARES	VALUE (P)
Banks & Fin Svc	974,010	105,059,340.00
Comm'l & Ind'l	202,659,500	270,089,720.00
PRO	27,383,000	54,863,060.00
Mining	185,063,000	5,842,000.00
OIL	23,500,000	813,700.00
GRAND TOTALS :	439,579,510	436,667,820.00

	AVERAGES	
Banks & Fin Svc	580.21	DOWN 0.95
Comm'l & Ind'l	1,997.66	UP 10.66
PRO	537.95	DOWN 1.03
Mining	1,415.26	UP 1.73
OIL	1.46	UNCH 0.00
All Shares Index	774.24	DOWN 3.07
Composite	1,414.79	DOWN 0.94

NO. OF ADVANCES: 30; NO. OF DECLINES: 41; NO. OF UNCHANGED: 38; NO. OF TRADED ISSUES: 109; NO. OF TRADES: 2,331

CURRENCIES

28-Jun-01

Country	Unit	Euro Equivalent	Foreign currency in US$	Foreign currency in Peso
United States	Dollar	1.161710	1.000000	52.3080
Japan	Yen	0.009342	0.008042	0.4207
United Kingdom	Pound	1.646259	1.417100	74.1257
Hong Kong	Dollar	0.149129	0.128370	6.7148
Switzerland	Franc	0.658565	0.566893	29.6530
Canada	Dollar	0.766451	0.659761	34.5108
Singapore	Dollar	0.637776	0.548998	28.7170
Australia	Dollar	0.600367	0.516796	27.0326
Bahrain	Dinar	3.081623	2.652661	138.7554
Saudi Arabia	Rial	0.359886	0.309790	16.2045
Brunei	Dollar	0.637112	0.548426	28.6871
Indonesia	Rupiah	0.000102	0.000088	0.0046
Thailand	Baht	0.025696	0.022119	1.1570
UAE	Dirham	0.316370	0.272331	14.2451
Korea	Won	0.000897	0.000772	0.0404
Euro	Euro	1.000000	0.860800	45.0267
Germany	Mark	0.511292	0.44012	23.0218
France	Franc	0.152450	0.131228	6.8643
Netherlands	Guilder	0.453780	0.390614	20.4322
Austria	Schilling	0.072673	0.062557	3.2722
Belgium	Franc	0.024790	0.021339	1.1162
Italy	Lire	0.000517	0.000445	0.0233
Finland	Markka	0.168188	0.144776	7.5729
Portugal	Escudo	0.004988	0,004294	0.2246
Spain	Peseta	0.006011	0.005174	0.2706
Luxemburg	Franc	0.024790	0.021339	1.1162
Ireland	Punt	1.269739	1.092981	57.1722

Microsoft unit to make RP its R&D hub in Asia

By Abigail L. Ho

MICROSOFT Great Plains, the business solutions arm of Microsoft Corp., said it was planning to make the Philippines its research and development hub in line with the expansion of its Asia-Pacific operations.

The company is increasing its budget for the coming fiscal year, starting next month, by 20 to 30 percent to finance the expansion program.

"Most of our investments for this year will go to the Philippines," MSGP products and services regional director and Philippine managing director Joey Gurango said in an interview.

Right now, MSGP has 130 employees in the Philippines.

For this fiscal year, MSGP will add 30 to 50 other people to its Asia-Pacific operations. About two-thirds of this number will come from the Philippines.

"We know that we can find highly qualified, English-speaking IT (information technology) professionals in the country," he added.

He also said that it was not the low cost of labor that encouraged MSGP to infuse more investments in the country but the people.

"The low cost of labor is actually offset by the high costs of electricity, rent and telecommunications. However, the Philippines is the only country that met our human resource requirements," he said.

He added that MSGP was offering above average compensation packages.

"In the Asia-Pacific region, there are over 100 companies selling similar business solutions. However, MSGP offers the easiest to maintain, most complete and reasonably priced solutions in the market," he said.

Gurango said the company was expecting that the new products would result in an incremental increase of 20 to 30 percent in its sales.

Microsoft Great Plains is a wholly owned subsidiary of Microsoft Corp., with representative offices in North America, Europe and the Asia-Pacific.

IBM, HITACHI

Acer bags $1.2B worth of deals

By Gil C. Cabacungan Jr.

TAIWAN PC maker Acer will step up its production in its Philippine subsidiary to meet impending supply contracts worth $1.2 billion with American computer giant IBM Corp. and Hitachi Corp. of Japan this year.

Subic Bay Metropolitan Authority Chair Felicito Payumo Jr. said the proposed supply contracts were expected to commence in September this year. Acer's new contracts were expected to have an immediate impact on the free port's export earnings.

The IBM and Hitachi contracts are much bigger than what Acer and other locators of Subic have exported last year. SBMA reported that exports hit $1.18 billion last year and it expects exports to grow 30 percent to $1.54 billion.

Payumo said Acer's decision to produce the additional requirements in its Subic factory plant underscored the Taiwanese PC maker's confidence in the country despite the political crisis and the recent air dispute between Manila and Taipei.

In April, Acer—through its wholly owned subsidiary Acer Information Products (Philippines) Inc. Corp.—announced that it was expanding its factory to include the production of desktop computers.

The Board of Investments granted Acer pioneer incentives for the assembly of desktop computers in its $120-million production facility at the Subic Bay Freeport Zone. The Subic plant is Acer's biggest outside Taiwan.

Acer expects to produce 150,000 units a year of the Acer Veriton FP2 at an average retail price of $804 per unit. Acer has earmarked 90 percent of its output would be shipped out to Europe, United States and Asia. The expansion to desktop computers would cost P30 million and would create 102 new jobs.

Acer has been operating at the Subic Freeport since 1995 churning out computer notebooks, base units, motherboards and add-on cards.

Its operations, however, were ruffled last year due to the suspension of flights between the Philippines and Taiwan after the Civil Aeronautics Board accused Taiwan's China Airlines and Eva Air of violating the provisions of an interim air agreement.

Acer earlier said that the ban on Taiwanese air carriers severely delayed the delivery of the bulk of its inputs from Taiwan and derailed the shipment of its finished goods.

Processors seek 50% cut in tariffs on imported meat

By Christine A. Gaylican

LOCAL meat processors have asked the government to cut by half the tariffs slapped on imported pork, beef and poultry products in the next three years to help reduce the industry's production cost.

The Philippine Association of Meat Processors Inc. (Pampi) made the appeal in the wake of the continuing depreciation of the peso that has raised the cost of the industry. The industry imports a big chunk of its meat requirements due to the inadequacy of local supply.

"We need to cut down by half the tariffs on all meat imports as local meat processors import an average of 50 million kilos of meat yearly," Pampi executive director Francisco Buencamino yesterday said during a public hearing on the proposed tariff reduction schedule of so-called sensitive agricultural products.

Buencamino said that high import costs compounded by the peso depreciation have also affected the prices of canned meat and other processed food products in the market.

Pampi has proposed the reduction of the tariffs on fresh or chilled meat, cattle and swine to a range of 10 to 15 percent, from 30 to 40 percent.

The industry wants the proposed tariff cut to be included in the country's tariff reduction offer to be submitted during the forthcoming Asean Free Trade Area economic ministerial meeting.

The 38 member companies of Pampi include Jollibee Foods Corp., San Miguel Foods Corp., Purefoods-Hormel Co. and RFM Foods Corp.

Pampi vice president Teodoro Alexander Po, who is also the president of Pacific Meat Co. Inc., said the industry's sales were expected to drop as consumer demand for meat products continued to drop.

PacificMeat Co. Inc. is the producer of the Argentina brand of canned meat.

Purefoods-Hormel, for its part, said its projected 10 to 15-percent increase in sales this year might no longer be attainable.

Purefoods-Hormel Co. president Alejo Francisco said in an interview that the mad cow scare in the first quarter compounded the depressed demand during the lean months of January to February.

SBMA embarks on underwater tunnel project

ITOCHU Corp. and NKK Steel of Japan consider as achievable the multibillion-dollar "pipe dream" of connecting Central and Southern Luzon through a 15-kilometer underwater tunnel between Bataan and Cavite.

The ambitious project to be patterned after the Tokyo Bay tunnel was presented yesterday by Subic Bay Metropolitan Authority Chair Felicito Payumo Jr. to members of the Financial Executives Institute of the Philippines.

Payumo said that while the project was still on the drawing board, he expected the project to gain broader support from the government, his partners at the Subic Clark Alliance Development Program and the private sector.

Payumo said the proposed Manila Bay tunnel would substantially cut travel time between the two regions as it would bypass Metro Manila's choke-filled streets.

Payumo said the project would allow industries in the Calabarzon region to get faster access to Subic's deep harbors and Clark's runways to transport their goods.

He said it was important to undertake this project now in lieu of the numerous elevated highways being built to ease Metro Manila's traffic woes in anticipation of the increase in population in Central and Southern Luzon, and Metro Manila over the next 20 years.

Cocktales . . .

(From page B3)

turned lobbyist after retirement was hired by the Ramos administration to represent Philippine interests in Washington. Despite the changeover in Malacañang and Ernesto Maceda's initial resistance, Kaplan managed to please the easy-to-please Joseph Estrada and had his contract renewed. That contract, whose funding comes from the cash-strapped Department of Trade and Industry, is due to expire after tomorrow.

Short takes

- THE ASIA-PACIFIC managing director of Standard and Poor's, the ratings agency that has caused much grief to the country's economic managers because of its recent negative ratings on the Philippines, is a Filipina-American by the name of Cecille Saavedra.
- MANILA Meteor, a new English broadsheet with a targeted limited circulation in Manila, is set to hit the newsstands on Monday. Frankly, we are mystified not only as to who the real owners of the paper are but also as to why the paper was named after a falling star. In any case, we wish them good luck.

Heard through the grapevine

PAL president Avelino Zapanta is in Hong Kong on a media blitz, apparently timed for a threatened pilots' strike next week over at competing Cathay Pacific.

(Cocktales may be reached by e-mail at cocktales_pdi@yahoo.com or at cocktales_pdi@hotmail.com)

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AUCTION SALE

NUESTRA DAMUS NAV Pawnshop Makati City Auction Sale on July 9, 2001 all unredeemed pledges during the month of February 1-28, 2001. Nuestra Br. II Pio-9:30am; Nuestra Br. I-10:30am; Damus Br.I Pasong Tamo-12:30pm; Nuestra Main-JP 1:30pm; NAV Pawnshop-2:00pm; Nuestra Br IX Zapote-3:00pm Sons of [illegible] Auctioneer

NUESTRA DIAJADE PAWNSHOP Las Pinas Metro Manila. Will Have its Auction Sale on July 11, 2001. All unredeemed pledges during the month of February 1-28, 2001. Diajade Main-9:30am; Diajade Br. II-10:30am; Nuestra Br. III-11:30am; Diajade Br. I-1:00pm; Nuestra Almanza-2:00pm. Sons of J. Lanuza-Auctioneer

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Work From Home 8937903

NOTICE OF LOSS

Notice is given on the loss of Dangerous Drugs Licensed Card with S2 Lic. No. 19181N00 issued to Maria Consuelo Hernandez - Sumayao MD on Sept. 8, 2000 (PDI-June 29, 2001)

PERSONAL

Make 3 wishes 1 business, 2 impossible. Pray 9 Hail Mary's for 9 days on the 9th day put out this ad and your wishes will come true - FGF

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SR. MA. JOSE A. ARCELLANA

MEDICAL MISSION SISTER
of Manila

died on June 27, 2001 in Quezon City.

Her body lies in state at 30 Collantes Street, Loyola Heights, Quezon City.

Interment will be on Saturday, June 30, 2001 at Loyola Memorial Park, Marikina after the 8:00 a.m. Mass in Collantes.

The Medical Mission Sisters and the Arcellana family extends thank you, relatives and friends as you join us in prayers for her eternal joy.

In Loving Remembrance
On the First Death Anniversary
of our beloved

CYNTHIA E. TUANQUI VALTE

Died June 29, 2000 in Woodland Hills, C.A.
We, her family, relatives and friends deeply miss her presence but her loving memories will always remain in our hearts forever.
Holy Masses will be offered in the following churches:

Mt. Carmel Shrine, New Manila, Q.C.	June 29, 2001	7:00 am
St. Peter Parish Church, Q.C.	June 29, 2001	10:00 am
St. Jude Church, Legaspi City, Albay	June 29, 2001	6:30 am
Redemptorist, Legaspi City, Albay	June 29, 2001	6:30 am
St. Peter & Paul, Parish Church, Polangui, Albay	June 29, 2001	6:00 am
St. Timothy's Church, West, LA, C.A., USA	June 29, 2001	5:30 pm
Holy Family Church, Archesia, C.A., U.S.A.	June 29, 2001	5:30 pm
Lady of the Valley Church, Canoga Park, C.A.	June 29, 2001	5:30 pm
Holy Angel Church, Arcadia, C.A., U.S.A.	June 29, 2001	5:30 pm

---

Our Beloved **PAPA**

Francisco "Frank" Quintana Bocobo

July 12, 1933 – June 26, 2001
of Cabanatuan City, Nueva Ecija

Passed into God's loving embrace & eternal happiness.

His loving wife **Priscila**; his children **Irma Clarita & Jaime Delos Reyes, Nathaniel & Josefina Alvarez**; his grandchildren **Timothy, Stephen, Pris Carmi, Francelle, Regine, Irma Clair, Isobel, Mutya, Tammy & Chloe, Frances Joan, Jilian, Jed, Julius & Napoleon.**

His brothers and sisters, in-laws, relatives and friends request your prayers for the eternal repose of his soul.

His remains lie in state at Malabon North United Methodist Church.

Interment will be on Sunday, July 01, 2001 after the 1:00 p.m. Necrological Service at Malabon North United Methodist Church.

His remains will be interred at Eternal Garden Memorial Park, Baesa, Quezon City.

The family of the late

Atty. Nicanor T. Rivero

who joined our Creator in our Heavenly Home on 26 June 2001 at the age of 53.

Wishes to inform relatives and friends that his body lies in state at 93 Lakandula St., Naga City.

Interment will be on Saturday, July 7, 2001.

Message of Thanks

We, the bereaved family of

LEONOR B. GADDI

Sta. Ana, Pampanga

Who peacefully joined her Creator on June 20, 2001 at the age of 83.

Would like to convey our heartfelt gratitude to all the generous hearts who offered help and prayers, sent flowers, visited and kept vigil, attended the funeral rites and who in one way or another condoled with us in our moment of pain and grief.

We know that God raised the Lord Jesus from death. He will raise us to life with Jesus. He will present us, along with you, to God.

2 Cor. 4:14

Mother is the essence of LOVE

Mama did not only exist, she lived
Mama did not only live, she loved
Mama did not only love, she left a legacy.

ROSA AGUINALDO ROMUALDEZ

February 22, 1919 – June 25, 2001

wife of former Labor Sec. Norberto B. Romualdez, Jr. (†)

Butch & Betty
Toots & Tita Abiva
Victor & Jojo
Tonette & Betty Muñoz
Gudron "Kaifer" Hirt
Nonoy & Kleina
Jorge & Paying Tan
Alex & Fina Hocson
Philip & Luchie Singson
Danny & Jackie
Gert & Agnes Schlender
Lina

Grandchildren & Great grandchildren

Her body lies in state at Fatima Village, Tacloban City.

Interment will be on Tuesday, July 3, 2001 after the 8:00 a.m. Mass.
The family requests the pious readers to pray for the eternal repose of her soul.

LEONIDES L. BATTUNG

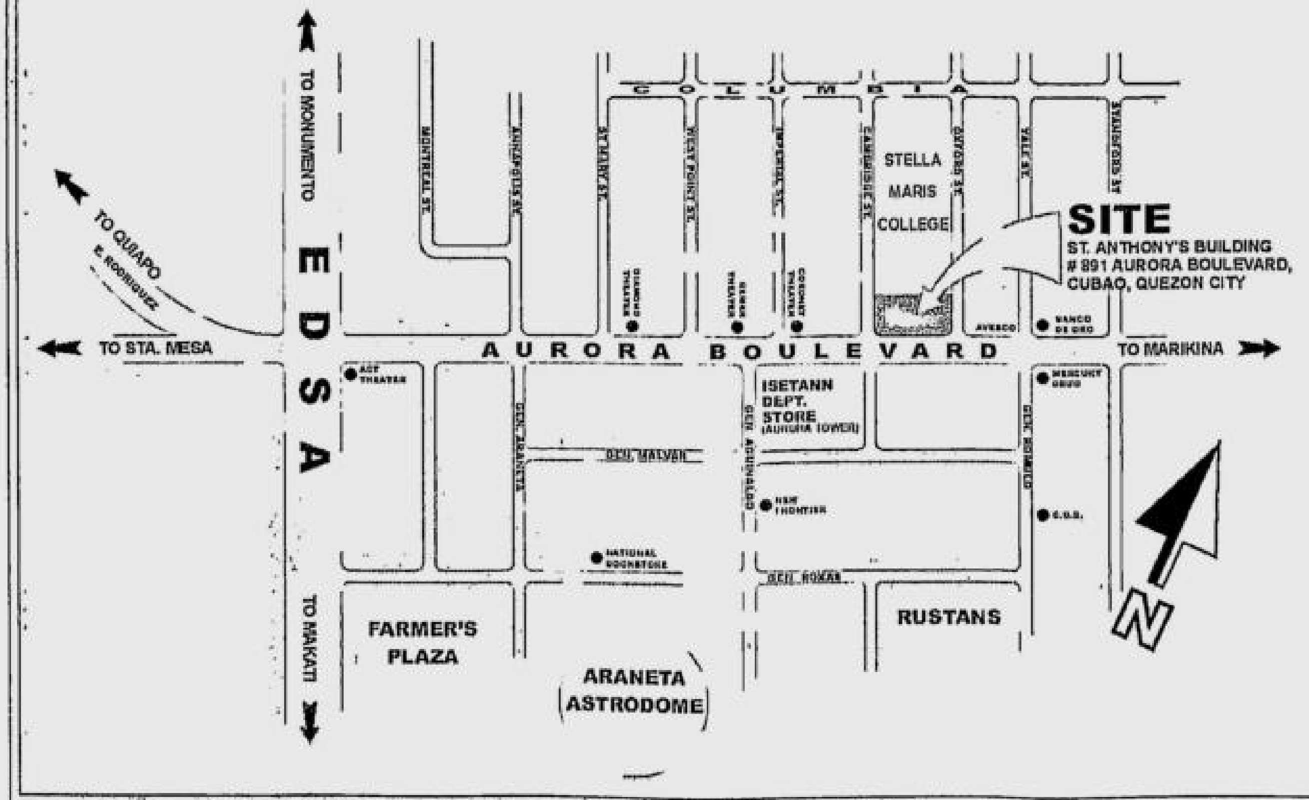
Now peacefully joined our God and Maker in our heavenly home on June 28, 2001 at the age of 66.

His beloved wife **Rosario "Ching" Rey Battung**; children **Rhue & Marie, Roy & Bing, Cherry & Jun Tichepco**; grandchildren **Audrey, Jeffrey, Angelo, Jermaine, Gerald, Andrea, Jemima**; mother **Anastacia Battung**; brother **Gabriel**, sister **Naty & Cesar Battung, Nora & Sergio Molic**; brothers & sisters-in-law; nephews & nieces ask to please pray for the repose of his soul.

His remains lie in state at La Funeraria Paz, Araneta Avenue, Quezon City.

Interment will be on Sunday, July 1, 2001 after the 9:30 a.m. Mass in Loyola Memorial Park.

INQUIRER CLASSIFIEDS
Aurora branch is now open to serve your Classified Ads requirements.
For inquiries, please call **421-1420** or **421-0343**.



In Loving Memory

On the First Death Anniversary of

Our Beloved

ARTASERXES "ART" L. SAMPANG

(March 5, 1936 - June 29, 2000)
Former Mt. Pinatubo Commission Executive Director

Mrs. Arcell L. Sampang,
Wern & Delma, Heinz & Lulu, Celine & Boyet, Grace & Henry, and Judy & Ricky, request relatives, friends and readers to remember him in their prayers and join them in the celebration of the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass to be held in the following churches on June 29, 2001:

MATER DOLOROSA PARISH *(East Rembo, Makati City)*	6:00 AM
OUR LADY OF SORROWS PARISH *(Dolores, San Fernando, Pampanga)*	6:00 AM
STA. MONICA PARISH *(Mexico, Pampanga)*	6:30 AM
ST. AUGUSTINE PARISH *(San Agustin, Pampanga)*	7:00 AM
NATIONAL SHRINE OF OUR LADY OF FATIMA *(Valenzuela City)*	7:00 AM
METROPOLITAN CATHEDRAL *(San Fernando, Pampanga)*	5:30 PM

A memorial and testimonial gathering will be held at the Officers Club, Clark Special Economic Zone, Pampanga after the 4:30 p.m. Mass.

Cecilia de Ocampo Lagman

Passed on to her eternal reward
On June 27, 2001 at the age of 55.

We ardently request that you pray for the eternal repose of her soul.
Husband **Oscar P. Lagman, Jr.**
Children **Monica, Ojay,** and **Maysie**
Father **Pacifico de Ocampo**
Sisters and brothers **Heidi** and **Pete Sison,**
Nina, widow and her brother **Pacifico Jr.,**
Sonjie and **Francis Trillana,**
Bobby and **Marilyn,**
Butch and **Maricar**
Mother-in-law **Lourdes Lagman** and sister-in-law **Leila Cruz**
Nephews and nieces and other relatives.
Her remains lie in state at Chapel 2, St. Alphonsus de Liguori Church in Magallanes Village, Makati City.
Her remains will be cremated after the 7:30 a.m. Mass on Saturday, June 30, 2001.
We love you dearly. We will miss you.

MAGDALENA OBEN MOTA

Peacefully joined her Creator
on June 27, 2001 at the age of 93.

Her bereaved children **Natividad & Gerry Dango, Cecilia, Dr. Jose Jr. & Rosalinda, Rodolfo & Lucy,** and **Zita**; brother **Dr. Vicente H. Oben**; sister **Sr. Ma. Esperanza**; in-laws **Dr. Antonio & Elvira Mota, Socorro M. Cruz, Sergio Corpus** and **Engracia Oben**; and grandchildren **Jose III & Jocelyn, Ana Marie, Raymond, Geraldine, Daniel** and **Simon**; nephews, nieces and other relatives request the pious readers to pray for the repose of her soul.

Her remains lie in state at the St. Alphonsus de Liguori Mortuary Chapel, Magallanes Village, Makati City.

Interment will be on Sunday, July 1, 2001 at the Manila Memorial Park, Sucat Road, Parañaque City after the 2:00 p.m. Mass at Magallanes Church.

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MS. LILIAN REYES
155G I. Mendoza Street, San Roque, Marikina City
Cellphone No. 0919-212-3230

Taguig BCO
RISE E-TAGUIG
MS. REGINA C. VELASCO
GHQ Signal, Taguig, Metro Manila
Tel. No. 838-7883, Cellphone No. 0919-433-9797

Commonwealth BCO
RISE COMMONWEALTH GROUP
MS. OFELIA J. BALLESTA
628 Grapes Street, Commonwealth Avenue, Quezon City
Tel Nos. 932-2490, 428-0840

Novaliches BCO
RISE E-NOVALICHES
MS. EMMA C. DANIEL
#18 Sta. Rosa Street, Villa Magdalena 2, Camarin Road
Novaliches, Caloocan City
Tel No. 983-0346, Cellphone No. 0919-308-2387

Pandacan BCO
RISE CHIT-PANDACAN
MS. NECITA D. SALMO
1944 A. Sampaguita Street, Pandacan, Manila

Luzon BCO
RISE EXCEL-PANGASINAN
MR. MANUEL G. VALDEZ
Nancayasan, Urdaneta City
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MS. EMILY SORIANO - Tel. No. (075) 522-5378
MS. IMELDA SARMIENTO - Tel. No. (075) 515-6755
#43 Perez Boulevard, Dagupan City
Cellphone Nos. 0917-365-4775, 0919-664-9784

Western Visayas/Panay Island BCO
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2nd Floor, AMIGO PLAZA, Iznart Street, Iloilo City
Telefax No. (033) 337-9252, Cellphone No. 0917-514-1369

Applicants for Business Center & Sub-Centers Operations (BCO/SCO) in other cities/areas may contact RISE PHILS. CO. LTD. Tel. No. 687-4311; CP No. 0919-592-4258, 0919-212-3230

NOTICE TO THE PUBLIC

This is to inform the public that **Ms. DEARLA A. FERNANDEZ**, of Binangonan, Rizal, whose picture appears above, is not authorized by **O.Q. Nicolas Enterprises, Inc.**, Darius De Leon and Nenar Nicolas, to deal with the properties of the latter located in Muzon, Taytay, Rizal and Angono, Rizal, respectively. Complaints for estafa and falsification have been filed by the said owners against Ms. Fernandez with Prosecutor's Office of Rizal and Quezon City. For queries, please call Ms. Mercy Nicolas at **451-0031**.

(PDI - June 29, 2001)

NOTICE OF DISSOLUTION OF WATERMAN SERVICES CORPORATION

Notice is hereby given that WATERMAN SERVICES CORPORATION has filed with the Securities and Exchange Commission a Certificate of Amendment of Articles of Incorporation, shortening its corporate life to **June 30, 2001.**

Any person who may have a claim against said corporation may present the same to **MR. NORMANDO V. CENDANA** at the principal office of the Company at No. 93 Maharlika Drive, United San Pedro Subdivision, San Pedro, Laguna.

The announcement serves as notice to all parties concerned of the dissolution of said Company.

(Sgd.) **NORMANDO V. CENDANA**
Corporate Secretary
WATERMAN SERVICES CORPORATION

(PDI - June 15, 22 & 29, 2001)

INVITATION TO BID

6 Units - "ANDERSON" Super-duo expellers complete wiht 40/50 HP electric motors, equipped with screw-type conditioners, with variable feeder and electrical controls, on an "as-is-where-is" basis.

These maybe inspected at no. 19 Felix Manalo Street, San Juan, Metro Manila. Those interested may submit their sealed bids to the above address not later than July 16, 2001.

For further details, please contact 726-8013 (Gerry) or 726-0921 to 24 (Diony Pusong).

(PDI -- June 28, 29 & 30, 2001)

BUSINESS OPPORTUNITIES

DO YOU WANT TO HELP DISTRIBUTE FAST-MOVING BASIC COMMODITIES AND EARN INCOME AT BIG DISTRIBUTORS RATE (up to 25% ROI per QUARTER)?

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Republic of the Philippines
DEPARTMENT OF LABOR AND EMPLOYMENT
NATIONAL LABOR RELATIONS COMMISSION
Quezon City

INVITATION TO PREQUALIFY AND TO BID

The National Labor Relations Commission (NLRC), thru the Bids and Awards Committee (BAC), invites qualified bidders by way of sealed bids for the supply and delivery of:

SECURITY GUARD SERVICES

Interested bidders may obtain further information from the BAC Secretariat, Office of the Executive Clerk, 7th Floor, PPSTA Building, No. 4 Banawe Avenue corner P. Florentino Streets, Quezon City. Meeting/bidding will be held at the Conference Room, 6th Floor. The bidding schedules are as follows:

JULY 11, 2001, 10:00 AM	- Pre-bid meeting
JULY 18, 2001, 10:00 AM	- Last day of submission of prequalification requirements
JULY 25, 2001, 10:00 AM	- Last day of submission of bid proposals and opening of bids

NLRC reserves the right to reject any or all bids, as well as, waive any defect or informality on the bids received, accept the offer most advantageous to the government and does not guarantee that any award shall be made. Its decision shall be final and binding.

(Sgd.) **PERLITA B. VELASCO**
Chairman, BAC

(PDI -- June 29 & 30, 2001)

NOTICE TO THE PUBLIC

TAN SEE PIN exclusive distributor of the original Hamburg Sharpening Stone from Germany warns consumers of the proliferation of imitation of said product. To distinguish the imitation from the original take note of the following differences:

Original	Imitation
Made from Hamburg, Germany	Made from China
Not Water Absorbent	Water Absorbent
A piece weights 550 gms.	A piece weights 400 gms.
1 box 40 pcs. Weights 22 kg.	1 box 40 pcs. weights 16 kg.

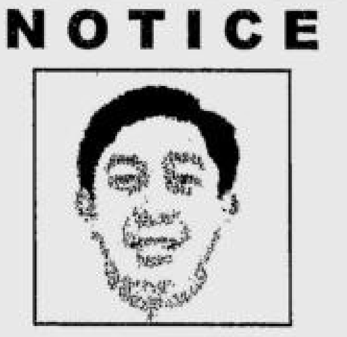
The use of imitated products may cause permanent damage to your utensils/equipment.

To be sure of the original product, purchase it at Room 403, Mariano Uy Building, La Insular Street, Binondo, Manila or Room 524 Downtown Center, Paredes Street, Binondo, Manila c/o Cleto Chua or call 244-4306.

Please notify the Law Offices of PAMARAN RAMOS & PARTNERS of the source/s of the imitated products at Tel. Nos. 894-2875, 810-3274, 810-3254. Anyone found in possession or dealing with the imitations shall be charged accordingly.

(PDI -- June 29, 2001)

NOTICE



Please take notice that **Mr. RICHARD DENIS TAN** whose picture appears herein is no longer connected with Jade Internet and Industries Corporation and has been terminated for a cause as of **March 16, 2001.**

Any transaction entered into by Mr. Tan after the said date, shall not be honored by the company.

JADE INTERNET AND INDUSTRIES CORPORATION
Suite 1802 18/F City State Condominium
Shaw Boulevard, Oranbo, Pasig City

(PDI -- June 25 & 29, 2001)

PNOC-Energy Development Corporation
Energy Center, Merritt Road
Fort Bonifacio, Taguig, Metro Manila
Telephone 893-1320 loc. 5115, Fax 815-4216

INVITATION TO BID

The PNOC-Energy Development Corporation (PNOC-EDC) invites interested accredited or prequalified contractors to submit sealed bids for the project

YEAR 2001-2002 ANNUAL HAULING/ DELIVERY CONTRACT FOR METRO MANILA AND TO VARIOUS PROJECT SITES
EDC 01-094

Bid documents may be secured from the Contracts Administration Group (c/o IGNACIUS M. CORCUERA) starting JUNE 29, 2001 upon payment of a non-refundable amount of PESOS: FIVE HUNDRED PESOS ONLY (P500.00).

Sealed bids in two (2) sets shall be received by the Contracts Administration Group at the above address not later than 2:00 PM of July 31, 2001 and then publicly opened immediately thereafter.

For purposes of clarifying certain issues, a pre-bid conference will be held on JULY 16, 2001, 10:00 a.m. at the PNOC-EDC, CAC Conference Room, Building 5, Energy Center, Merritt Road, Fort Bonifacio, Taguig, Metro Manila.

PNOC-EDC reserves the right to reject any or all bids or parts thereof, to waive any informality therein, to accept such bids or to award any part of the work to any bidder(s) whose bid(s) is(are) considered most advantageous to PNOC-EDC

(Sgd.) ESTER R. GUERZON
Manager, Operations
Services Division

(PDI – June 29, 2001)

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INVITATION TO PRE-QUALIFY AND BID

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All interested parties may secure pre-qualification documents upon presentation of Letter of Intent and original copies of Contractor's License and Certificate of Registration for authentication at the PBAC Secretariat TSU Administration Building, and take note of the following schedules.

Submission of Letter of Intent	June 29 - July 2, 2001
Submission of Pre-qual documents	July 6, 2001
Issuance of Notice of Pre-qualified Contractors	July 16, 2001
Issuance of Bid Documents	July 19-20, 2001
Site Inspection	July 19-20, 2001
Pre-bidding Conference	August 13, 2001
Bidding	August 20, 2001

The TSU-PBAC reserves the right to reject any or all bids, waive any defects therein and accept the offer most advantageous to the University.

(Sgd.) **CECILIA M. NERIDA**
PBAC Chair

Noted:
(Sgd.) **DOLORES G. MATIAS**
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(PDI--June 29, 30 & July 2, 2001)

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NOTICE OF PUBLIC AUCTION (SECOND CALL)

Notice is hereby given that the Department of Education, Culture and Sports will sell one (1) unit of 2000 FORD EXPEDITION XLT, 4x4, 8 cylinder, color black located at DECS Motorpool, ULTRA Complex, Pasig City thru sealed bids to be received by the Committee not later than 2:00 PM on July 10, 2001 at Bulwagan ng Karunungan, Rizal Building I, ULTRA Complex, Pasig City.

Notice is hereby given that this is a second call because the result of the First Auction was not acceptable to the Department.

Interested parties may inspect the unit at the DECS Motorpool starting June 26, 2001 until July 9, 2001.

Forms and further information may be obtained from the BAC Secretariat, Room 112-A Mabini Building, ULTRA Complex, Pasig City with telephone nos. 636-6543, 633-9343.

BAC reserves the right to reject any or all bids, to waive any defect contained thereto and accept the bids most advantageous to the Government.

(Sgd.) ERNESTO S. PANGAN
Undersecretary
Chairman, DECS-BAC

(PDI -- June 26, 27 & 29, 2001)

INQUIRER TRiViA

By BONG BARRAMEDA

Sound and Fury

Q. What's the source of expression 'the sound and the fury'?

A. It's a direct take from William Faulkner's *The Sound and the Fury* (1929), a novel about the decadent Compson family of Jefferson, Mississippi. Partly narrated by 30-year-old idiot Benjy, it describes his neurotic parents, his nymphomaniac sister Caddy and his brother Quentin, who commits suicide tormented by incestuous feelings. But the phrase is not original to Faulkner; he picked it up from *Macbeth*, one of Shakespeare's best-loved tragedies: *Life's but a walking shadow, a poor player / That struts and frets his hour upon the stage / And then is heard no more: it is a tale / Told by an idiot, full of sound and fury, / Signifying nothing.*

Classified Odd. The longest gloved fight on record took place in New Orleans on April 6-7, 1893, between two Americans, Andy Bowen and Jack Burke. It lasted 7 hours and 19 minutes. At the end of the 110th round, the fight was declared a no-contest (later changed to a draw) because both boxers were too exhausted to continue.

Past Forward. This day in 1974: Maria Estela "Isabel" Peron *nee* Martinez assumed the presidency of Argentina following the death of her husband, Juan Peron. She thus became the world's first female president, but labor unrest, inflation and political violence pushed the country to the brink of chaos. Accused of corruption, she was held under house arrest for five years and eventually went into exile in Spain. Isabel was Peron's third wife, after Evita (Maria Eva) Duarte.

WORD WATCH

Kasado : from the Spanish *casado*, 'married.'

PDI -- June 29, 2001

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Bank of Japan decides to keep money policy

TOKYO—Japan's central bank decided Thursday to keep its monetary policy unchanged, despite pressure for easing measures amid signs of further deterioration in the nation's economy.

The widely expected decision came one day after the US Federal Reserve cut short-term rates by 0.25 percentage point. It was the Fed's sixth rate cut this year to try to restart the weakened US economy.

The Bank of Japan has few policy options left. In March, it pushed interest rates down to near zero and has continued to help banks borrow at low rates by keeping money plentiful. But that has done little to pull the economy from its deepest slump in decades.

BOJ Gov. Masaru Hayami has said the central bank can only do so much to help an economy that needs fundamental reforms, such as loosening regulations on companies and cleaning up the bad debt problem at the nation's banks.

The central bank has resisted pressure from government officials, who want it to do more to prevent the economy from slipping into recession.

In a statement following its decision, the BOJ said it would act only if a market crisis emerged.

Evidence of Japan's grim economic outlook is mounting. Earlier this month, the central bank lowered its assessment of the nation's economic prospects, saying that exports, long the engine for growth, are declining because of a slowdown in the United States and Asia.

Falling exports have hurt production and weakened the corporate sector. Corporate bankruptcies and unemployment remain high. That has made Japanese wary of the future and reluctant spenders. *AP*

DEALERS FORECAST

Fed almost done cutting rates

NEW YORK—The Federal Reserve's aggressive campaign of interest rate cuts to ward off a US recession is nearing its end, leading Wall Street dealers predicted in a new Reuters poll on Wednesday.

Seventeen of the 25 primary dealers of US government securities concluded the Fed will make only one more quarter-point reduction in the benchmark federal funds rate this year when central bankers next meet in August.

The poll was conducted after the policy-setting Federal Open Market Committee lowered the funds rate on overnight bank lending from 4 percent to 3.75 percent, its sixth but smallest cut so far this year. The cuts have brought the fund rate down by a total of 2.75 percentage points.

All but two of the 25 firms who deal directly with the Fed in money market operations predicted another quarter percentage point cut in the funds rate at the next FOMC meeting on Aug. 21. Two said there would be no move.

Though the Fed signaled on Wednesday that it may still need to lower rates further, it slowed its aggressive pace of rate cutting seen from January to May. Those five months saw the Fed quickly slash the funds rate in five half-point moves.

"The important point is they are close to the end of this," said Richard Berner, chief economist at Morgan Stanley.

US growth slowed dramatically in the second half of last year and the Fed sprang into action in early January to try to keep the economy from slipping into a recession.

So far, the Fed, the White House and most on Wall Street are betting the country will narrowly skirt a recession. The dealers polled saw a 35 percent chance of recession this year, down from 39 percent in a May poll.

But economists who closely track business cycles said this week that they saw many of the telltale signs of past recessions in an eight-month decline in industrial production and a two-month decline in payroll employment.

The nation's arbiter of recessions, the National Bureau of Economic Research, said last week that it was possible a recession began recently, its first such warning in this downturn.

But optimists say consumer spending and confidence and the housing market have been resilient enough to offset the manufacturing slump and mounting job losses. The great hope is that the Fed's aggressive action will make for a relatively short-lived downturn.

The FOMC statement mentioned prominently that Fed rate cuts so far this year have totaled 2.75 percentage points, or 275 basis points. Wall Street economists saw this as an allusion to the idea that there is already a good deal of economic stimulus in the pipeline, which may not have yet had its full impact.

Fed officials also expect consumer spending to benefit in the second half from tax refunds in the next few months, part of a package of tax cuts passed recently by the US Congress.

"They do not mention tax cuts, but you have to suspect that was also on their mind. They emphasized that they have eased a total of 275 basis points this year," said Michael Moran, chief economist at Daiwa Securities International. *Reuters*

BOJ's Hayami says reforms key to recovery

TOKYO—Bank of Japan Governor Masaru Hayami said Thursday that structural reforms in the financial sector were vital for an economic recovery in Japan.

The comments, in a prepared address to a meeting of finance arms of labor organizations, were released shortly after the BOJ Policy Board decided not to ease monetary policy further for now.

"Overcoming the bad loan problem is an important task not only to make the financial system healthier but also to put the economy back on a sustainable growth path," Hayami said in the speech, read on his behalf by a BOJ official.

The BOJ earlier said its policy board members voted unanimously to leave monetary policy unchanged, a decision widely expected in financial markets.

Political pressure on the central bank to ease, however, had been mounting, especially after data earlier in the day showed industrial output fell for a third consecutive month and after the Federal Reserve cut interest rates a day earlier.

The BOJ last eased credit in March, when it effectively returned to zero interest rates by adopting a quantitative easing policy by setting a 5-trillion-yen ($40.24 billion) target for banks' reserves in current account deposits with the central bank. *Reuters*

No threat to Singapore, says Moody's

SINGAPORE—Singapore faces a substantial slowdown this year but no serious threat despite negative regional and global trends, according to Moody's Investor Service.

The US-based credit-rating firm said in a report Singapore's high Aa1 rating and stable outlook for long-term foreign currency ceilings were the result of strong fundamentals, comfortable assets and a stable political system.

It noted Singapore's strength during the 1997-98 financial crisis, which ravaged the Asian region.

"Moody's believes that the record of Singapore's economic management and its external indicators during a period of external volatility have demonstrated the country's ability to withstand shocks and the appropriateness of Moody's ratings," said the report's author, vice president and senior analyst Steven Hess.

The report said only diminished competitiveness due to a lack of relative productivity growth or some political upheaval would lessen Singapore's attractiveness to multinational companies.

"There is little evidence of such influences developing," Hess added.

Singapore has lowered its gross domestic product growth forecast this year to between 3.5 to 5.5 percent, from 5 to 7 percent previously due to falling exports resulting from the US economic slowdown and waning global demand for electronics products.

Analysts, however, said recent data showing sharp declines in key non-oil domestic exports and the manufacturing output would drag GDP much lower than the government target.

Moody's said its latest comments were part of a yearly update to the market and were not a formal action to alter the credit rating of Singapore. *AFP*

Japanese auto exports fall 9%

TOKYO—Japanese auto exports fell 9 percent to 286,758 vehicles in May from a year earlier as a global economic slump ate into demand from overseas, an industry group said Wednesday.

It marked the fifth straight monthly fall.

Car exports sank 8.9 percent to 245,660 vehicles and truck shipments slipped 12 percent to 37,450, but bus exports grew 17.7 percent to 3,648, the Japan Automobile Manufacturers' Association said in a statement.

"Demand for exports is shrinking, especially to the European and US markets," Satoshi Honda, a spokesperson for the association, said.

"Another reason behind the decline is continuous moves by Japanese automakers to shift production sites overseas," the spokesperson added.

Exports to the United States tumbled 18 percent to 102,283 vehicles and shipments to the European Union dropped 12.6 percent to 58,671 motors, the association said.

After two months in decline, Asia-bound shipments rose 6.6 percent to 31,079 vehicles, the association said.

"The rise mirrors popularity of certain vehicles in Asia, such as Nissan Motor's Tulsar small car in Malaysia," Honda added.

The overall value of vehicle exports, including auto parts, fell 17.8 percent to $5.6 billion in May.

Motorcycle exports dipped 7.5 percent to 108,889, the association said. *AFP*

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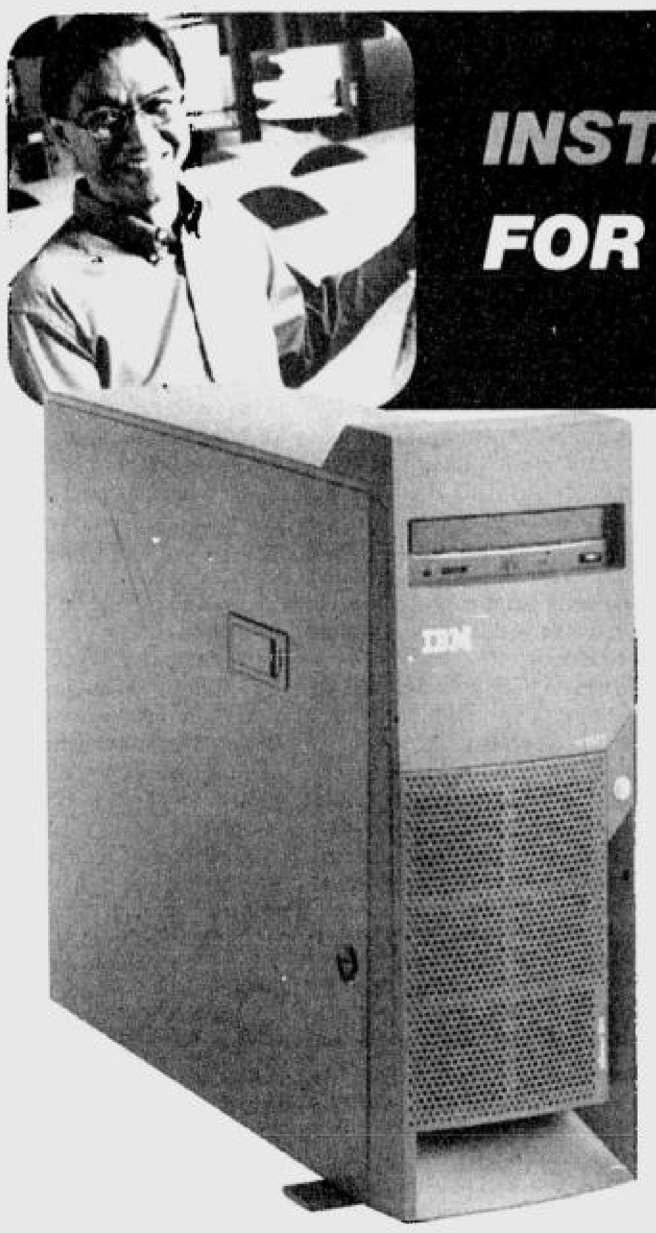

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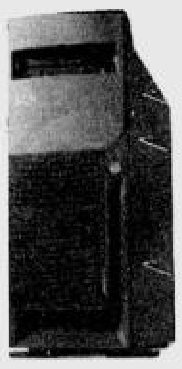

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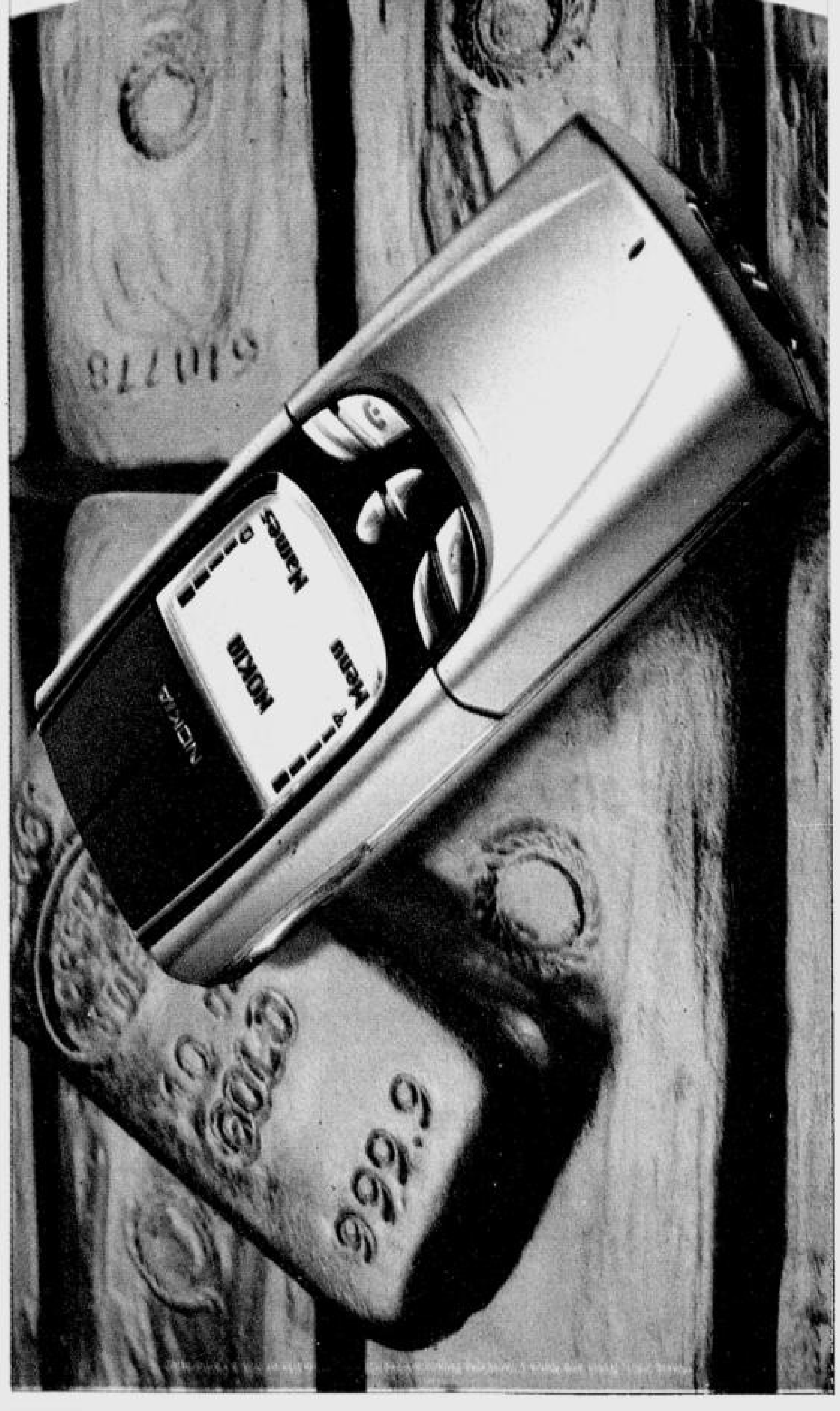

Japan, China trade war hits auto exports

TOKYO—Japanese car exports to China have become the latest casualty of a trade war that has split Japanese industry and raised questions about Beijing's willingness to play by global trading rules.

The deepening dispute, which began as a fight over cheap Chinese vegetables, has exposed the disparity of interests between Japan's globally competitive export-oriented manufacturers and its inefficient—but politically powerful—farmers.

And it has put the Chinese government in the awkward position of having to defend its commitment to free trade at a time it is nearing the end of sensitive negotiations to achieve its long-standing goal of being admitted into the World Trade Organization.

The trade war made headlines again this week, when Toyota Motor Corp. and other major Japanese automakers said they were preparing to halt production of cars for export to China beginning next month.

The announcement followed Beijing's decision last week to slap tariffs of 100 percent on imports of Japanese cars, mobile phones and air conditioners—in retaliation for duties imposed temporarily on Chinese mushrooms and other agricultural products in April.

Japanese automakers said they were forced to stop shipments to China because orders had virtually disappeared.

"Almost all orders for vehicles scheduled to be produced in July for export to China were canceled by local buyers," said Toyota spokeswoman Hisayo Ogawa. "We have no forecast for orders in August and beyond."

Toyota, Japan's largest automaker, shipped 11,046 vehicles to China last year. That was less than one percent of its total exports. But all Japanese automakers were counting on the long-term potential of the Chinese market, and industry executives had urged both countries to settle their differences quickly.

Tokyo and Beijing, meanwhile, have accused each other of playing unfair.

China's chief trade negotiator, Long Yongtu, called the Japanese tariffs "nothing but trade protectionism."

Japanese Trade Minister Takeo Hiranuma said China's riposte was incompatible with trade agreements between the two countries as well as with WTO rules.

Despite the animosity, analysts say that the impact of the trade war has been relatively small. That's in part because Japanese companies that sell in China increasingly make their products there as well.

"The monetary impact is not that large," said Ron Bevacqua, an economist at Commerz Securities in Tokyo. "It's the threat that this could go on which is more important."

Analysts estimate the damage to Japan at $700 million, while the bill for China is put at around $100 million. Trade between the two countries was 9.2 trillion yen (about $74 billion) last year, according to Japan's Finance Ministry.

Tokyo's approval of so-called safeguards against Chinese agricultural imports rankled Beijing because it seemed likely to encourage calls for help from other Japanese sectors suffering from competition.

Farmers are among the most stalwart supporters of Japan's long-governing Liberal Democratic Party, and the government agreed to the temporary duties despite grumbling by consumers.

Textile manufacturers were seen as next in line to petition for safeguards. But analysts say that the current spat will make the Japanese government extremely wary of extending further protection to beleaguered industries. *AP*

WTO entry to keep China in check

KUALA LUMPUR—China's entry into the World Trade Organization would bring stiffer trade competition but would also keep the emerging giant in check, a Malaysian minister said Thursday.

"Once they are in WTO, they will be tied down to WTO rules. That is a good thing for us . . . when China is a member, we will know what they are doing," International Trade Minister Rafidah Aziz told reporters.

Southeast Asia must however seek to attract investment in niche areas and boost its competitiveness, she said.

"China has wanted to enter the WTO for 15 years, so we are prepared. We know where they are more competitive and vice versa . . . we have to sharpen our competitive edge to be able to compete with China," she added.

Chinese negotiators meet WTO members in Geneva later Thursday for what is likely to be one of the last rounds of talks before admission into the global trade body.

Rafidah earlier opened a seminar on trade facilitation issues in the WTO between Asia and Europe.

In her speech, she reiterated Malaysia's stand that there was no need to launch a new round of global trade talks under the WTO.

"Malaysia does not see the need to introduce new rules to be negotiated within the WTO when existing rules already govern trade facilitation at the global level quite comprehensively," she said.

Rafidah said attention should instead be given to help developing countries implement existing rules amid a lack of resources and capacity.

Easing trade at the bilateral or regional levels would also be "more useful and realistic, rather than getting involved with negotiating additional rules multilaterally."

She said it would benefit Asia and Europe more to focus on improving trade flows between the two regions "rather than debating new rules in the WTO which cannot come to any resolution."

Rafidah warned against using trade facilitation efforts to reinforce market opening, or to extract tariff concessions or pressure countries to liberalize certain sectors.

The two regions had now aligned standards on five categories namely electrical, machinery, telecommunications, medical equipment and rubber products, she added.

'Tankan' to show boardroom blues

TOKYO—A cocktail of sluggish domestic growth, sliding economic indicators and the prospect of implementing painful reforms has knocked business confidence among Japan's corporate heavyweights sideways.

The Bank of Japan's quarterly Tankan survey of the corporate scene, due out Monday, will highlight a growing sense of gloom in boardrooms nationwide, economists warn.

"Every economist expects the index to worsen," said Shuji Shirota, a senior economist at SG Securities. "A decline from the previous survey will demonstrate the current economic hardships."

The March poll showed business confidence had plunged for the first time in 27 months.

Shirota forecast the Tankan index of large manufacturers' confidence would plunge to minus 16 from minus five in the previous survey, but he predicted a more shallow decline for the index gauging large non-manufacturers' sentiment—skidding to minus 16 from minus 13.

"There has been a big impact from a slowdown in overseas economies which is more conspicuous in the manufacturing than non-manufacturing sectors," he said.

Nomura Research Institute senior economist Kiichi Murashima agreed.

"I think the DI (diffusion index) for the manufacturing sector will deteriorate seriously, but the decline in the non-manufacturing sector will be more limited, indicating economic activity is still holding up," he said.

But Japan is stuck in a deflationary cycle and although sales volumes have improved for non-manufacturers, they are still getting stung by falling prices, according to BNP Paribas chief economist Ryutaro Kono.

The Tankan indices measure the difference between firms saying economic conditions are favorable and those saying they are unfavorable. A negative figure means a majority of firms believes conditions are unfavorable.

If Monday's Tankan is grimmer than anticipated, Japan's central bank may be forced to ease monetary policy to cushion the economy.

Exceptionally poor data would prompt "many investors to press for action from the BOJ," said SG Securities Shirota.

The BOJ effectively returned to zero interest rates in March to help prop up the sagging economy. The bank raised reserve levels in the current account to five trillion yen ($41.67 billion) from four trillion yen in an attempt to increase money market liquidity.

Despite gross domestic product figures showing Japan's economy had contracted 0.2 percent in the three months to March, the BOJ has so far resisted calls for further quantitative easing.

The bank argued such a move would offer the nation little help in its current state—with corporations reluctant to borrow money because there is scarce opportunity to invest and banks unwilling to lend because they are scared of increasing enormous non-performing loan portfolios.

But economists say the bank will not be able to ignore a bleak Tankan.

"The contents will surely have some influence on policy discussions at the BOJ," predicted Yoshi Sakakibara, economist at Merril Lynch. *AFP*

DBS still far from heavyweight class

SINGAPORE—Singapore's fast-rising DBS Group is moving aggressively toward its goal of becoming an Asian banking powerhouse, but analysts say it is still some distance away from the heavyweight division.

DBS Group Holdings Ltd., already Southeast Asia's largest banking group, has offered $5.2 billion for Overseas Union Bank Ltd. in a hostile bid that has shaken the rich city-state's cozy banking sector.

A merger would see DBS becoming the No. 3 commercial bank in Asia outside Japan and Australia, with assets valued at $111 billion.

Banking analysts pointed out, however, that the bank would still be a long way from joining the likes of Hong Kong and Shanghai Banking Corp., with $226 billion in assets.

Not to mention Japan's sumo wrestler-size players—Mizuho Holdings Inc. with $1.2 trillion in assets, Sumitomo Mitsui Banking Corp. with $863 billion, Mitsubishi Tokyo Financial Group Inc. with $798 billion, and UFJ Holdings Inc. with $726 billion.

DBS executives said the acquisition of OUB would enlarge the group's regional footprint but apart from Malaysia, ABN Amro banking analyst Sam Chin said, "OUB doesn't add to their regional portfolio at all."

The group could boast of a strong presence in Singapore's tiny domestic market of four million people but remained a virtually unknown entity to many consumers in the Asian region, analysts said.

"Outside of Singapore, their brand name is not very strong. So they still have a long way to go to transform from a relatively sleepy government bank into an Asian giant," Chin said.

More than a third of DBS shares are held by a state investment arm, but the government maintains that it takes a hands-off approach in business decisions of such companies.

Lee Yew Ying, a Singapore research manager at analysts Strategic Intelligence, agreed that "having OUB is not going to add all that much in terms of brand awareness" for DBS.

"I wouldn't say acquiring OUB is the final piece that will complete the puzzle to help DBS achieve its Asian ambitions," said Winston Siay, an analyst at Standard and Poor's MMS.

"What is probably still missing are the North Asian markets, such as Taiwan and South Korea," he said.

Prospects for further acquisitions in the near future are remote as these would stretch the bank's resources too thinly, analysts said.

DBS in April paid $5.4 billion for a controlling stake in Dao Heng Bank, the third biggest in Hong Kong.

"It will take a lot of management resources to digest the two acquisitions. There won't be anymore acquisitions for the next two to three years," predicted Seah Hiang Hong, head of Singapore research at Kim Eng Securities.

DBS has already established a foothold in the Philippines, Thailand and Indonesia, and getting OUB with its network of 12 Malaysian branches would cover the major Southeast Asian economies for DBS, analysts said.

Buying OUB will also solidify DBS' dominant position at home, thereby ensuring it has a steady source of revenues to help fund expansion plans.

"The transaction gives us great economies of scale. It adds to our capital ratios, so it is capital boosting," DBS president Jackson Tai told the Business Times. *AFP*

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10 questions to ask before getting a franchise

By Charito Estrada

WHEN people hear the word "franchise," fast-food restaurants like McDonald's, Burger King and Wendy's probably come to mind. But the truth is, the franchise business covers more than just hamburgers.

One out of every three dollars spent by Americans for goods and services is spent in a franchised business.

Homes are bought and sold through franchised real estate companies. These same homes can be cleaned, painted and carpeted through franchises, same with cars.

We can also have our hair cut, clothes cleaned, pets cared for through franchised businesses.

What's franchising?

Franchising is a method of doing business that has been adopted and used in a wide variety of industries and businesses.

The word "franchise" literally means to be free. In this sense, franchising offers people the freedom to own, manage and direct their own business.

However, as with any freedom, there are responsibilities. In franchising, these responsibilities have to do with the franchisee's commitments and obligations—usually spelled out in a franchise agreement or contract—to the franchisor.

The franchisor is the one who owns the right to the name or trademark of the business. The franchisee is the one who purchases the right to use the trademark and system of business.

Types of franchise

There are two different types of franchise arrangements:

- product distribution arrangements in which the dealer is to some degree but not entirely, identified with the manufacturer/supplier, and
- business format franchises in which there is complete identification of the dealer with the buyer.

Business format franchises offer the franchisee not only a trademark and logo but a complete system of doing business. Indeed, the word "system" is the key concept to franchising.

A franchisee receives assistance at all stages of the business, from site selection of the business to personnel/training, business set-up, advertising and product supply.

The franchisee pays a franchise fee up front and an on-going royalty that allows the franchisor to provide training, research and development, and support for the entire business.

In a nutshell, the franchisee purchases someone else's expertise, experience and method of doing business.

Success story of the 1990s

More than 550,000 franchise businesses dot the American landscape, generating more than $800 billion in sales. With a new franchise business opening somewhere in the US every eight minutes each business day, franchising is indeed the success story of the 1990s.

The opportunities available in franchising are drawing people from all walks of life. Corporate and professional people are buying franchises every day. Young people, just out of college, are considering franchises.

The number of women and minority franchise owners is increasing dramatically. Investors at all levels find that new financial investments can compete with the potential of a good franchise.

Franchising is especially attractive because it offers a good opportunity to people with various levels of capital and experience. Small business people are attracted, not only for the chance to be on their own, but also for the chance to do so within an established system.

Retired people from many fields find that franchises are an excellent way for them to remain active and at the same time provide a good source of retirement income.

Franchise owners like franchising because they can be in business for themselves but they're never left to fend for themselves, the franchisor is always there to help. Franchisors, on the other hand, like franchising because it is the best growth system ever devised.

The public likes franchising be-

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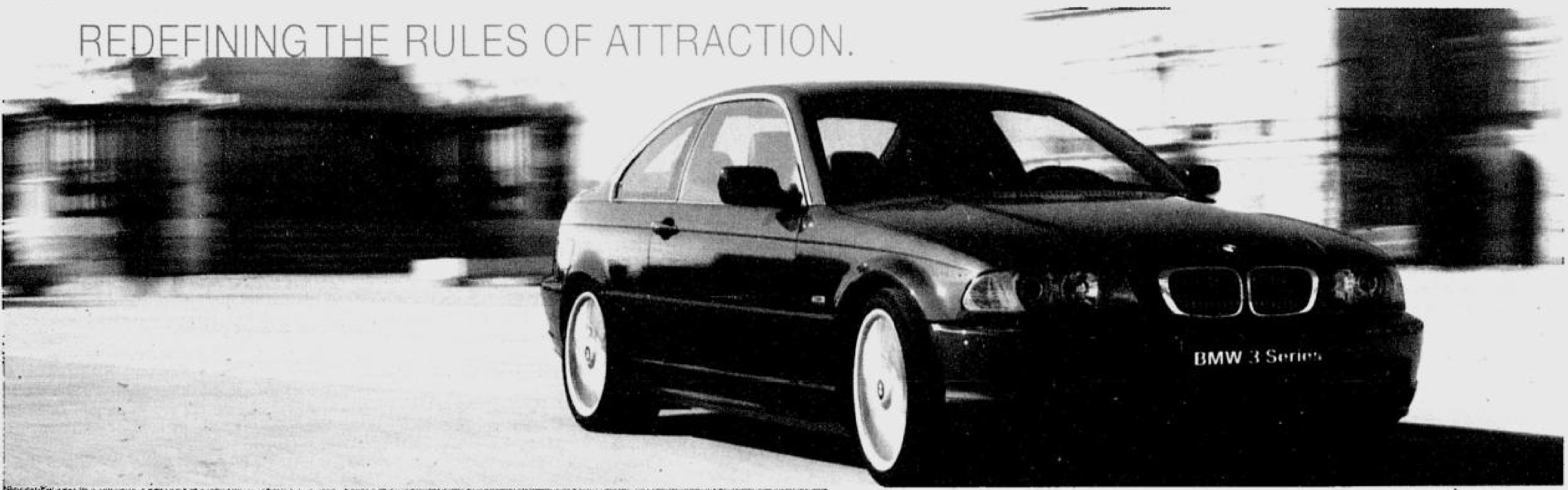

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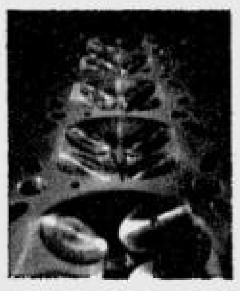

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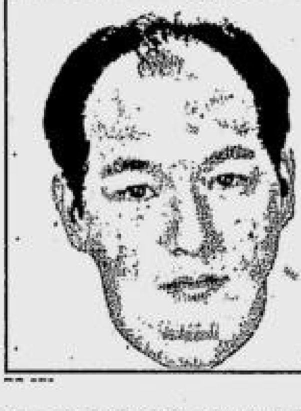

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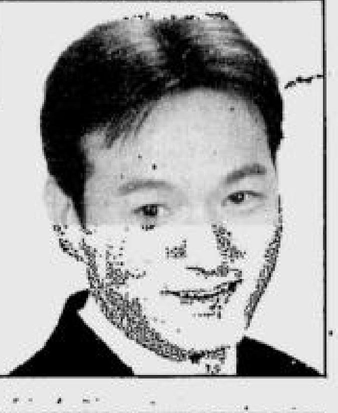

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TO MEET GROWING COMPETITION

Firm paints pretty face on 20-year-old face

BY TINA ARCEO-DUMLAO

MARKETING STRATEGY

VMV Hypoallergenics, the first company in Southeast Asia to introduce cosmetics that do not cause allergies, has actually been around since 1979 and its line of products is considered even better than the foreign counterparts.

It is a wonder then that many consumers who patronize VMV products prefer to keep their compact, lipstick or eyeshadow kit in their bags, while those who buy foreign brands proudly take it out in the washroom when they do their makeup repairs.

Blame it on the lack of a serious and focused marketing campaign.

VMV general manager Laura Verallo de Bertotto is the first to admit that VMV lacks the proper image to match the superiority of its products. She, however, says that it is due primarily to the company's emphasis on research and development and in perfecting the line of skin care products.

"There were limitations and we believed at the start that people will just buy the product because of its quality," Bertotto says.

VMV was the first company to define the concept of hypoallergenicity, which means that most, if not all, of the top 10 allergens are omitted from the formulation of the beauty products.

The Philippine Bureau of Food and Drugs even incorporated VMV's self-imposed standards on the disclosure of Ingredients, product formulation, tightly controlled production and safe packaging into its own regulatory procedures.

Growing competition and VMV's own expansion plans, however, forced the cosmetics company to adopt a true blue marketing campaign in an attempt to take its rightful place in the field of skin care products.

After much research into how to properly market VMV's 70 products, in 20 product lines and six product categories, VMV came up with ad and public relations dubbed "The Art and Science of Validated Hypoallergenicity."

Bertotto explains that the advertising campaign combines works of art with specific VMV products, to showcase the science and the art behind VMV's products.

"That is, while VMV is strongly rooted in the applied science of hypoallergenicity, our work in the perfection of the skin is also, necessarily, deeply aesthetic," VMV says in a statement.

VMV also chose this indirect route to advertising its products to make it stand out, veering away from traditional advertising of beauty products that focus on fashion and models.

VMV's ad campaign features artists—accomplished or up-and-coming—whose work exemplifies elegance, imagination and creativity, and VMV's products with details on the formulation, action and efficacy.

"We started the campaign last year with images captured on camera by some of the country's leading photographers. What we want is for the consumers to be inspired by these works of art to purchase our product," Bertotto says.

VMV's roster of artists includes Joanne Zapanta Andrada (photography), Anton Barretto (product and interior design), Spanish artist Valeria Cavestany (waterolor, mixed media), Raymund Isaac (photography), Rajo Laurel (fashion design), Max Makowski of the United States (film and prose), Irish Fergal O' Gorman (prose), Monica Duarte Olbes (photography), Ingrid Sala Santamaria (classical music), Michele Sison (fashion design) and American Kate Stookey (photography).

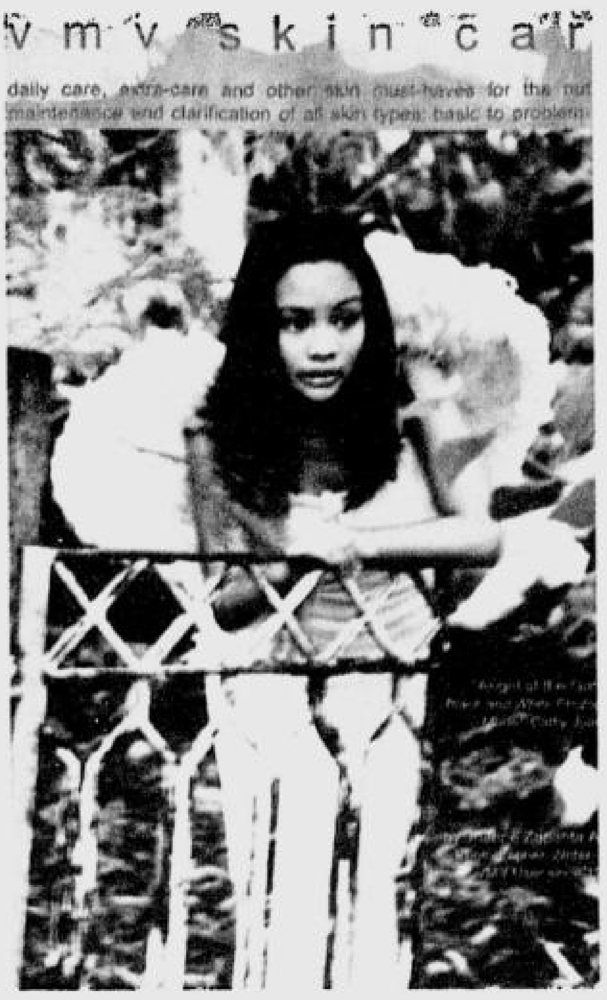
VMV's product categories, on the other hand, include skin care for daily needs of all skin types, sun and light protection, advanced treatment, body and bath, color (full range of lip, eye and cheek shades and textures), make up and customization (products are customized according to the customer's skin care tests).

Bertotto says the artists are provided a sample of VMV's products and they are left to express the features of those products into different works of art.

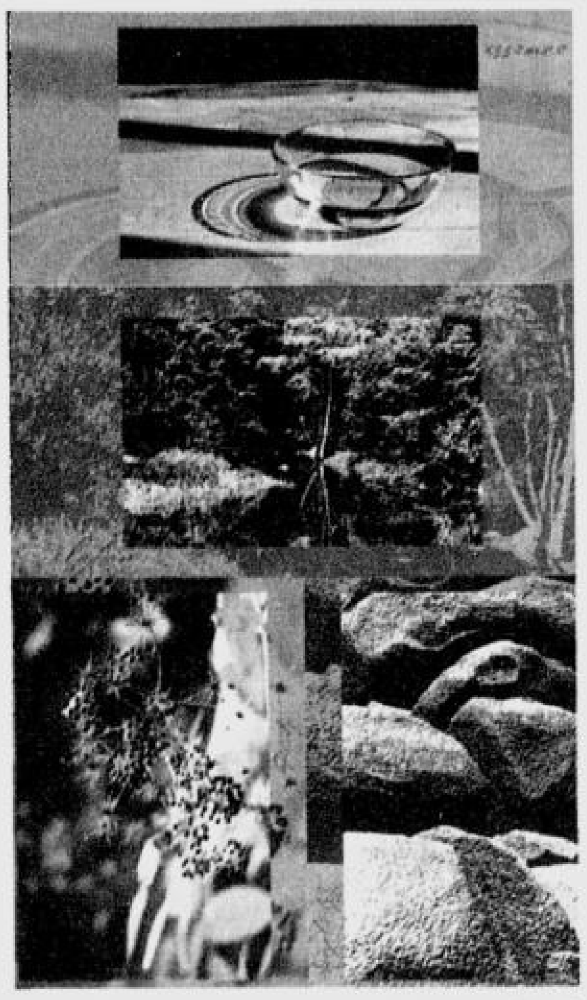
VMV's product features are centered on their being hypoallergenic and fragrance-free, research-based to treat various skin problems and finally being able to produce products that are safe.

"We featured one artist per product since August last year and it has done wonders. We want to target people in their mid 20s to the late 30s. We feel that this group is more open to new things and are not burdened by divisions in society," Bertotto says.

Bertotto is confident that the ad campaign, combined with efforts to improve distribution and eventually going to the export market, will make people proud to use products that are proudly Philippine made.


vmv skin car
daily care, extra-care and other skin must-haves for the
maintenance and clarification of all skin types: basic to problem

"ANGEL at the Gate," black and white photography by Joanne Zapanta Andrada representing VMV skin care products.



KATE Stookey photographs VMV body and bath products

Henry Sy's scholars graduate with honors

TAIPAN Henry Sy's SM Foundation recently honored its new batch of scholars for the school year 2001 at the SM Megamall's Megatrade Hall.

Sy and his wife, Felicidad Sy, personally met with the 76 scholars and their parents. Also present during the affair were SM Foundation's board member Paulino Tan, executive director Lydia Echauz, and project director Nilda Bernaldez.

This year's batch has three magna cum laude graduates—Anne Dolorosa, a BSE major in English graduate of the Pamantasan ng Lungsod ng Maynila; Arnel Marinay, who completed a BS Electronics and Communications Engineering course at the University of San Jose Recoletos (USJR) in Cebu; and Emmanuel Millar, Computer Engineering graduate of the Pamantasan ng Lungsod ng Maynila. Millar, who now works with NEC, said that what makes the SM scholar stand out is the fact that the program molds him to become a "scholar with a heart."

There were four cum laude awardees in the batch: Malou Balmones, Mildred Mantua, Ronald Allan Belzena and Melvin Ocampo.

Most scholars came from excellent colleges and universities like the City College of Manila, PLM, PNU, Sta. Rita College, Technological Institute of the Philippines, Adamson University, UE, Pamantasan ng Makati, UST, Rizal Technological University, St. Francis of Assisi, New Era University, UP and Central Philippine University.

Others graduated from provincial schools like the USJR in Cebu, University of St. La Salle in Bacolod and the University of San Agustin in Iloilo.

SM Foundation's College Scholarship Program was established in 1993 to help poor but deserving students who wish to take college studies in the field of education, chemistry, computer and electronics engineering and other similar courses.

It has since then given scholarship opportunities to those in the National Capital Region and to those from Cavite, Cebu, Iloilo, Pampanga—where SM department store branches are located. It has 400 scholars at any given time and the number grows every year.

PROGRAM
congratulate
Sch

SM: HENRY SY and wife Felicidad (seated) with their latest batch of scholars: PLM's magna cum laude honor students Anne Doloroso and Emmanuel Millan (first from left), cum laude graduates Melvin Ocampo, Marilous Balmorea, Mildred Mantua, Janice May Delfin and Jomar Chua.

10 questions to ask before getting a franchise

(From page C1)

cause franchised stores offer known names and dependable standards of quality. And that's the real reason behind the success of franchising and the customers give it their wholehearted support at the cash register.

For all these reasons, there has never been a better time for entrepreneurs to think about owning a franchise business.

Is franchising for you?

While there are many examples of successful franchises, buying a franchise is no guarantee of success. Each year there are failures, both on the part of franchisors and franchisees.

Before buying a franchise, 10 important questions need to be carefully and thoughtfully answered.

1. Are you willing and able to take on the responsibilities of managing your own business?

A thorough self-analysis is important before buying a franchise. One of the myths that has been perpetuated is that franchise ownership is easy. This is just simply not true.

While the franchisor will give the start-up training and offer ongoing support, the franchisee, must be prepared to manage the business. While some franchises may lend themselves to absentee ownership, most are best run by hands-on management.

The budding entrepreneur must be willing to work harder than ever worked before. Forty-hour weeks are also a myth, particularly in the start-up phase of the business. It is more like 60- to 70-hour weeks.

2. Will you enjoy the franchise?

People sometimes get a franchise because they think it will earn a lot of money, only to realize later that they do not enjoy the business. The adage "know thyself" certainly applies here.

The entrepreneur should get into a business that he will be willing to grow for the next 10 to 15 years. It is important that the prospective franchisee determines his interests and types of businesses he will really enjoy.

3. Are you willing to completely follow the franchisor's system?

The very key to franchising success is the consistency of product and service customers find from one franchise to another. When you display the sign and logo of a franchise, you are indicating to customers that you follow a particular system.

People who are extremely entrepreneurial in the sense that they do not like to conform to a predetermined formula should have second thoughts about buying a franchise.

4. Do you have a history of success in dealing and interacting with people?

Many franchised businesses are based on people relations. The ability to interact well with the franchisor, franchisees, employees and customers cannot be emphasized enough. A negative, critical franchise owner can be a detriment to the entire franchise system. The prospective franchisee must have a track record of good relationships with employers, supervisors and fellow employees.

5. Can you afford the franchise?

One of the major causes of business failure is undercapitalization. While the franchisor will be able to provide a good idea of the start-up costs, sometimes these will vary due to leasehold improvement needs and other valuables.

The entrepreneur must have enough money to not only open the franchise, but to run it until it becomes profitable. For some franchises, this may take a year. It is better to start out with more money than less.

6. Have you carefully studied the legal documents?

Franchisors are required to prepare a document called the Franchise Offering Circular, which will provide pertinent information about the franchise as well as the franchise agreement.

This agreement will govern the relationship between the franchisor and the franchisee. Since it is a vital document, it should be studied very carefully and discussed with a lawyer.

7. Does the franchise you are considering have a track record of success?

Entrepreneurs should get tq know the principal directors of the company—their business background and how profitable their franchise has been over the past years. Get an accountant to review the financial papers of the franchise. Is it a solid company?

Also, examine how long the franchise has been in business. A new start-up franchise may offer the opportunity to get in on the ground floor. But it might also mean that the franchisor does not have sufficient experience to fully develop the system.

8. Are the franchisees generally happy and successful?

The FOC will contain a listing of all of the franchise owners. It would be worth the time to contact a number of them to discuss their experiences with the franchise. Has the franchisor followed through on commitments? Did the franchisees receive adequate training? Would they buy the franchise again? Is the business profitable?

9. Do you like the franchisor's staff—those people with whom you will be working?

One of the most important elements of a franchise is the ongoing support and contact the entrepreneur will have with the franchisor. For this reason, the prospective franchisee should feel comfortable with the franchisor's staff.

10. Do you have family support?

Managing a franchise is a full-time job. This means that a lot of time will have to be spent building the franchised business. For this reason, the husband, wife and children need to be supportive of the decision to buy a franchise. *(The author is a public relations representative of the Philippine Franchise Association, tel no. 687-0366 to 67.)*

Valuation of improvements for tax purposes simplified

BY: LUCIL C. QUISAY-VICERRA
SGV and Company

TAX-FILES

SELLING or buying real property with improvements and not sure if you are paying the correct taxes on the transaction? The recent BIR circular should be of great help.

The BIR issued last February Revenue Memorandum Audit Order (RAMO) No. 1-2001 to clarify the procedures and guidelines in determining the value of improvements for tax purposes.

Improvement refers to additions made to a property that are intended to enhance its value, beauty or utility or to adopt it for new purposes.

Prior to RAMO 1-2001, the rules for determining the value of improvements for tax purposes were contained in RAMO 2-91 and then in RAMO 1-2000.

Under Section 6.1 of RAMO 1-2000, which carried over the provisions of RAMO 2-91, improvements were valued for tax purposes using the following formulas:

1. Deduct zonal value of the land from the total selling price/consideration for both land and improvement as indicated in the deed of sale.

2. For improvements introduced from 1991 to present, the value of the improvement is the construction cost as indicated in the building permit and/or occupancy permit.

3. For improvements introduced from 1986 to 1990, the value of the improvement is the construction cost as indicated in the building permit or occupancy permit, plus 10 percent per year after the year of construction.

4. For improvements introduced in 1985 and prior years, and in places other than the National Capital Region and chartered cities where there is no building and/or occupancy permit, the value of the improvement is the fair market value (FMV) of the improvement per latest tax declaration plus 100 percent if classified as residential or agricultural, other than fishpond/prawn farm, or plus 150 percent if classified as commercial, industrial and/or agricultural devoted to fishpond/prawn farm.

Notwithstanding that the old rules clearly allowed the adjustment of the FMV of real property per tax declaration by adding 100 percent or 150 percent, depending on the classification of the property, the BIR did not apply any adjustment in two earlier rulings.

In one ruling, the BIR ruled that the basis of the tax on the sale, transfer or other disposition of real properties (whether land or improvements) should be the latest or the 1994 zonal value, or the FMV as shown in the 1994 tax declaration of the property, whichever is higher.

This ruling applies to those cases where the BIR has already determined the zonal values.

In another ruling, the BIR ruled that the basis of the tax should be the FMV that appears in the 1994 or later years' tax declaration of the property involved.

In both rulings, the BIR said that RAMO 2-91, which allows the adjustment of FMV per tax declaration by adding 100 percent or 150 percent, as the case may be, shall not be applied.

Despite these two rulings, the BIR nevertheless still carried over to RAMO 1-2000 the provisions of RAMO 2-91 on the 100 percent or 150 percent adjustment in the FMV of the property.

To resolve the conflict between RAMO 1-2000 and the two BIR rulings, RAMO 1-2001 amended Section 6.1.1 of RAMO 1-2000 and now provides for the following guidelines to determine the value of improvements for tax purposes:

1. Deduct zonal value of the land from the total selling price/consideration for both land and improvement as indicated in the deed of sale; the resulting value of the improvement shall not be lower than the FMV appearing in the latest tax declaration covering such improvement at the time of the transaction/transfer.

2.The FMV per latest tax declaration at the time of the sale or disposition, duly certified by the city/municipal assessor, shall be used.

No adjustments shall be added on said value, provided that the tax declaration bears the upgraded FMV of the said property pursuant to Section 219 of Republic Act No. 7160, otherwise known as the "Local Government Code of 1991" and the last paragraph of the Local Assessment Regulations No. 1-92 dated Oct. 6, 1992.

3. In case the tax declaration was issued three or more years prior to the date of sale or disposition of the real property, the seller/transferor shall be required to submit a certification from the city or municipal assessor whether the latest tax declaration covers the real property. Otherwise, the taxpayer shall secure its latest tax declaration and shall submit a copy, duly certified by the assessor.

Based on these guidelines, the value of improvements for tax purposes will now be the value arrived at after deducting the zonal value of the land from the selling price/consideration for the land and improvement as indicated in the deed of sale, or the FMV appearing in the latest tax declaration, covering the improvement at the time of transfer, whichever is higher.

The rules allowing the use of construction cost per building permit and/or occupancy permit or adjustment of 100 percent or 150 percent in the FMV of the improvement per latest tax declaration, depending on the classification of the improvement pursuant to RAMO 1-2000, no longer apply.

The deletion by RAMO 1-2000 of the provision allowing the adjustment in the FMV of the improvement by adding 100 percent or 150 percent, in effect reduces the taxes to be paid by the sellers and buyers of real property including improvements, in cases where the FMV of the improvement as appearing in the latest tax declaration is used as the value of the improvement for tax purposes.

In addition, these sellers and buyers are now assured that the value of the improvements subject of sale will be correctly determined, thus ensuring the payment of the right amount of taxes on the transaction.

Congratulations to the SY 2001 Graduates of the SM College Scholarship Program

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Bachelor of Science in
Electronics & Communications Engineering
University of San Jose -, Recoletos (CEBU)

MILLAN, EMMANUEL G.
Bachelor of Science in
Computer Engineering
Pamantasan ng Lungsod ng Maynila (NCR)

Cum Laude

BALMORES MARILOU V.
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major in Mathematics
Philippine Normal University (NCR)

CHUA, JOMAR L.
Bachelor of Secondary Education
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Philippine Normal University (NCR)

DELFIN, JANICE MAY V.
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major in Mathematics
Philippine Normal University (NCR)

MANTUA, MILDRED E.
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OCAMPO, MELVIN B.
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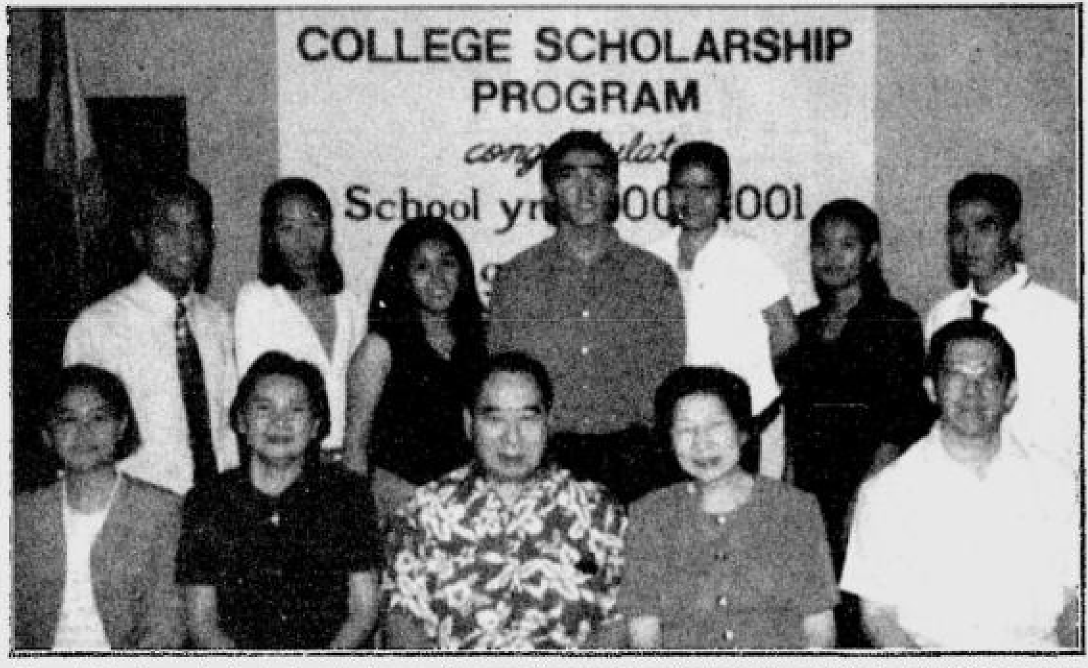
STA. ROMANA, LIEZYL S.
Bachelor of Secondary Education
major in Mathematics
Philippine Normal University (NCR)

TOLENTINO, ANNIE D.
Bachelor of Science
in Electronics & Communications Engineering
Rizal Technological University (NCR)



Mr. and Mrs. Henry Sy (seated, center) pose with committee members (seated, left to right) Ms. Nilda C. Bernaldez, Project Director of Shoemart College Scholarship Program, Dr. Lydia B. Echauz, Executive Director of Shoemart Foundation and Dr. Paulino Y. Tan, Board Member. Behind them standing are the Magna Cum Laude and Cum Laude graduates of 2001.

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Education Physics
Philippine Normal
University

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in Computer Engineering
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Communications Engineering
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Recoletos (CEBU)

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University of the Philippines
Diliman (NCR)

CABADING, LOURDES P.
Bachelor of Science
in Chemical Engineering
Pamantasan ng Lungsod
ng Maynila (NCR)

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Communications Engineering
Technological University
of the Philippines (NCR)

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Pamantasan ng
Makati (NCR)

CASO, ARLIE G.
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San Agustin (ILOILO)

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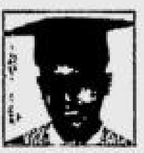
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MARQUEZ, ARIEL A.
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University

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Rizal Technological
University

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Engineering
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ng Maynila (NCR)

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Engineering
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Food firm brews new relationship between youngsters and coffee

NESTLÉ, the world's leading food and beverage company, is launching its first ever global integrated communications campaign aimed at recruiting new consumers to the Nescafé coffee brand.

The $30-million global campaign is specifically aimed at younger consumers and involves a unique combination of integrated marketing communication platforms, including a global advertising campaign, a multi-faceted and groundbreaking global MTV sponsorship, events, Web-based radio via Rhythm Radio and digital consumer relationship marketing. It has been developed by McCann-Erickson WorldGroup through the collaborative effort of all its units, and is the result of a year-long research study into the global youth market.

"Global changes among young consumers have presented us with additional new opportunities for the Nescafé brand," comments Olle Tegstam, senior vice president, coffee and beverages strategic business unit, Nestle SA, in Vevey, Switzerland. "We now know young people have a refreshing new relationship with coffee and Nescafé is perfectly positioned to take advantage of this."

The research study, conducted via McCann Pulse, McCann's global proprietary consumer insight tool, provided extensive insights into the new world of coffee being experienced by young people. This research, which also explored how young people respond to advertising and other communications, led to decisions to develop a more open-ended creative approach—"embedded interactivity." "Coffee is now the beverage of choice amongst young people," explains Andrew Ward worldwide account director on Nescafé. "The role of coffee for young people has fundamentally changed from one based around functional needs to one which allows them to participate in an exciting and provocative world, and which offers friendship and sociability, inspiration and creativity, opportunities and possibilities."

"Our goal was to create a new generation of Nescafé drinkers around a common global brand idea focused on youth. We want Nescafé to be an active participant in the full fabric of young people's lives—to reflect how they feel about and view life."

The new campaign is built around the proposition that Nescafé is "Life's Agent Provocateur." The brand line "One Thing Leads to Another" reflects the essential truth that anything might happen over a cup of coffee. Each of the communication strands has been carefully planned to support this brand idea and complement one another in ways that will appeal to the youth market.

The communications campaign, which broke globally on June 7, features four TV spots and 12 new print executions. Each advertisement has its own special story and builds upon the theme, "One Thing Leads To Another."

The TV ads are all mini films, which pull the camera back on what might happen after drinking a cup of Nescafé. The audience enters the ad at the end, before having the storyline unfolded step by step.

Vaughn Arnell (Brit Award for Robbie Williams' 'Rock DJ) directed the commercials to give them a strong MTV feel. Similarly, the print campaign shows a snapshot of a particular story where Nescafé was an active participant, allowing the reader the pleasure of filling in what happened before and after the story.

"Young people today live in a world of infinite possibilities," comments Marcio Moreira, chief creative officer of McCann Erickson WorldGroup. "The Nescafé campaign recognizes their lifestyle and the fact that life can lead you down many different roads."

Strategic alliance

A key part of this program is a unique deal with MTV.

"When deciding upon a global strategic partner, there were a number of important considerations," comments James Ringshall, client services director, Universal McCann EMEA. "We needed to attract a media owner with global distribution and a consistent global positioning."

This strategic alliance, the largest ever multimillion-dollar, multi-platform sponsorship deal, will culminate in the first ever global sponsorship of MTV's Video Music Awards. The partnership with Nescafé is also MTV International's first and largest sponsorship deal across all of the network's international channels in Europe, Latin America, Asia, Japan, Australia and Russia, covering 260 million households in 139 territories.

On-line

The third element of the campaign involves the Web and features "Nescafe Live," an additional youth-focused site enabling young people around the world to gather and share the information and data that fuel their lives. In addition to this, Nestlé is launching "Nescafé Pod," a unique Web application to provide young people with an amazing tool with which to communicate with their friends and exchange messages, data and even video images instantly.

"This new site is a totally branded Nescafé environment," enthuses Tegstam at Nestlé. It fosters interactive communities and at the same time, enables us to generate important information about our customers. The long-term health of any brand is determined by how consumers feel about it. We are determined that Nescafé will win a special place in the heart of the global youth community."

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YOUR WORLD OF FINANCIAL SERVICES

Issued by The Hongkong and Shanghai Banking Corporation Limited

Per DTI-NCR Permit No. 1492, series of 2001

Energy drinks winning fans at bars, not the gym

ATLANTA—Never mind what the label says. New brands of energy drinks selling in the United States are aimed more at marathon partiers than serious athletes. And that has health officials worried.

The drinks come in flashy cans and bottles with names like Red Bull, Adrenaline Rush and Jones Whoop-Ass Energy Drink. They don't taste great by almost universal consensus, but they're the fastest-growing segment of the beverage market because they deliver a quick punch of energy.

"A couple of years ago they were sort of an underground drink, served only at clubs. Pretty soon they're going to be everywhere," said Max Rodriguez, a marketing manager for the Edge Co., which imports Atomic Energy Drink from Brazil. "They enable you to practically stay up all night and not get really drunk."

The energy kick is delivered by a cocktail of stimulants. Many of the drinks contain caffeine and guarana, a South American plant used as a stimulant, plus a long list of herbs and vitamins promising better health and athletic performance.

"They definitely deliver a buzz or a jolt," said John Sicher, editor and publisher of Beverage Digest. "They're generally party drinks. A very large percentage are consumed in bars or restaurants and used as mixers."

"It definitely put me on a fast pace," said Elaine Bartlett, 29, of suburban Forest Park.

"It gets you drunker quicker, if you can stand the taste of it," said Brent Isbell, 30, of Anniston, Alabama.

At Cosmopolitan, a trendy midtown Atlanta bar, bartender Chris Bates once served 400 Red Bull-and-vodkas in a night. The slim silver-and-blue cans are stacked behind the bar alongside the bourbon and rum, and Bates described Red Bull as "absolutely the most popular thing we have."

"We go through them like you wouldn't believe," he said. "People want to get drunk and stay awake, and this pretty much does both."

The drinks are so popular that beverage giants Coca-Cola Co., Anheuser-Busch, Pepsi Cola and Cadbury Schweppes have all rolled out their own energy drinks in recent months or plan to launch them soon.

The drinks first showed up in nightclubs in New York and Los Angeles and were favored by revelers who like to drink and dance till dawn. They spread to bars nationwide and are sold in liquor and grocery stores. Most cost about $2 for 8 ounces.

Fans say the drinks help them guzzle alcohol without passing out at the table. But dietitians warn that fatigue is the body's way of saying it's had enough to drink and that energy mixers may fool people into thinking they're not as drunk as they are.

"What you'll be is a wide-awake drunk," said Chris Rosenbloom, head of the nutrition department at Georgia State University. "It's dangerous, this false notion that if I take this energy drink I'm alert and OK."

Another dietitian, Cynthia Sass of the University of South Florida, said several stimulants, when put together can amplify each other and become dangerous. And, she cautioned, a long list of herbs and vitamins don't make a product healthy.

"They think if it's natural, then the more the better. That's not true," Sass said.

Stimulant-spiked drinks can be tricky before exercise, too, dietitians said. A Kansas man suffered a heart attack in 1998 that caused permanent brain damage after drinking Ripped Force muscle drink, which contains ephedrine, then lifting weights.

The weight lifter, Shane Garrett, 25, sued the company that made the drink. A jury last month declined to award Garrett damages, finding him equally at fault for ignoring warnings on the drink.

Hansen Natural Corp. insists its energy drinks are safe for workouts.

"They're ideal drinking before working out if you're looking for an energy boost," Hansen chairman Rodney Sacks said.

Sacks said energy drinks represent $140 million to $150 million a year in sales for beverage manufacturers.

The energy drink market grew more than 102 percent over the past year, according to Beverage Marketing Corp., which supplies information and financial services to the beverage industry. ***AP***

'QUILa QN the LOOSE!

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P20 Baon Buddies
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To experiment is Human

The creator of a popular label for basics turns to something more adventurous

By Marge C. Enriquez
Photos by John Mossige,
Cal Carrie International

THE YOUTH (people under 25), unconcerned by inflation, have cash in their pockets or credit card extensions from their parents and new places where they can splurge their money: the stores. Retailers have been creating new sections or labels to cater to this emerging market that demands fashion-forward clothes. It's a risky business because the clothes are faddish. Stocks have to be replenished constantly to cater to the whims of the market that no longer has brand loyalty.

This is a niche that Ben Chan, head honcho and creator of such labels as Bench and Herbench, has recognized. "We felt we were missing out on this market," says Chan. Since the Bench and Herbench store space couldn't accommodate another category of dressing, Chan established another line with an androgynous name, Human.

He differentiates, "Bench is more basic. Human is edgy and experimental."

Like Bench, Human is also a lifestyle store but the concept is more fun. The display window features mannequins in urban clothes and T-shirts with optic art designs, enclosed by floating box frames. The store looks like a grocery with a frozen foods section, but instead of dairy and perishables, the shelves carry gels and grooming products. Rows of canisters contain accessories, plastic briefcases for plates and the best-selling buttermilk soaps. There are stacks of the salable dinnerware sets in lively colors. Salespersons are clad in denim aprons and clunky shoes.

The bulk, naturally, is clothing, particularly the Filipino uniform or its trademark street fashion—the T-shirt and jeans. Indeed, the only difference is that the designs on the shirt are more progressive and the pants come in various proportions and washes.

Suppliers

In this era of globalization, many local and foreign brands have been subcontracting their manufacturing in such countries as China and India where mass production is arguably more organized and labor is cheaper compared with the Philippines.

Chan has established a solid relationship with suppliers who have an infallible reputation for quality control. When there are repeat orders for a style in a different fabric, the suppliers send the materials for testing and approval to the Philippines.

If the clothes look edgy, it's because Chan gets his ideas from his frequent trips abroad. In planning a collection, store managers and the staffers discuss the salable styles and upcoming trends that can be accepted by the market.

Sometimes, for the sake of being current, Human will take risks by producing styles that managers feel won't sell. "Sometimes they tend to be safe," says Chan.

Predictably, the T-shirt, the Filipino youth's icon, is the sure bestseller. It comes in variations of rubberized prints in optic art and modern abstractions, nifty beadwork and applique. The beadwork traces such patterns as the punk Union Jack. Men's shirts carry subtle details such as a trimming on one side of the collar or a zipper from the collar to the shoulder or a patchwork one shoulder. The ladies' line carries skirts with fagotting designs and leatherette skirts in argyle patterns and even something as outrageous as pink with holes and yarn.

Future collections will have a lot of circle skirts, floral and seashell prints, ginghams, stripes, soft denims and eyelet cottons. For sure, the look is not safe because Human caters to a client who doesn't want to be safe and boring.

Image model

Although Human began with an equal ratio of men's and women's wear, it has ended up with

TO EXPERIMENT/p.D6

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See shop posters for details.
Per DTI-NCR Permit No. 1331 Series of 2001

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See posters for details.
Per DTI-NCR Permit No. 0663 Series of 2001

The look of things to come

By Camille T. Cruz

Next season's looks are emerging: bright-colored, equestrian, sporty and denim-dominated

AS the year progresses, we will begin to see details, colors, shapes and moods emerging. They are the preview of trends to come. Some are already in the making and provide us a glimpse of the fashion future.

Let's start with color. There will never be too much or too little of color. Sparingly, it will be present in most pieces or accessories. Rather than an all-black head-to-toe ensemble, many seem to cleave to brightness. Geometric prints in reds and whites are a hot item. Red is bold when seen in a particular pattern or print. Red-orange in soft, fluid lines is an alternative.

Also, hot pink and white combinations are young and sophisticated, giving a unique casual look to the modern woman when it is time to dress-down. A hot pink T-shirt paired with white pants is simple. A pair of white pants with a hot pink border on the waist and the pockets is also unique.

Ironically, black is back and will be crawling into pieces in every form and fabric. It can be seen in faux leather combined with a matte black piece. It's a rebellious sort of elegance, like the old New Wave. Black-and-white combination is strong this year as well. Black leatherette pants combined with a feminine baby-doll top, for example, is a perfect mix of the masculine and the feminine.

The Equestrian look is also heading our way. Details that define this look are reinforced patches, belts, clips, holster straps and brass buttons.

BLACK-AND-WHITE combo is a prelude to the all-black look for next season. This boatneck blouse over an A-line striped skirt is by Mike de la Rosa.

Muted and restrained colors such as dark gray, black, pale gray, beige, sand, espresso and white characterize the style. The silhouettes are slim and the lines are smooth. Style cousins are colonial uniforms and hunting gear.

For casual gear, denim pants are always a necessity. This season, they are most attractive in dirty wash rather than the plain light blue denims we always see.

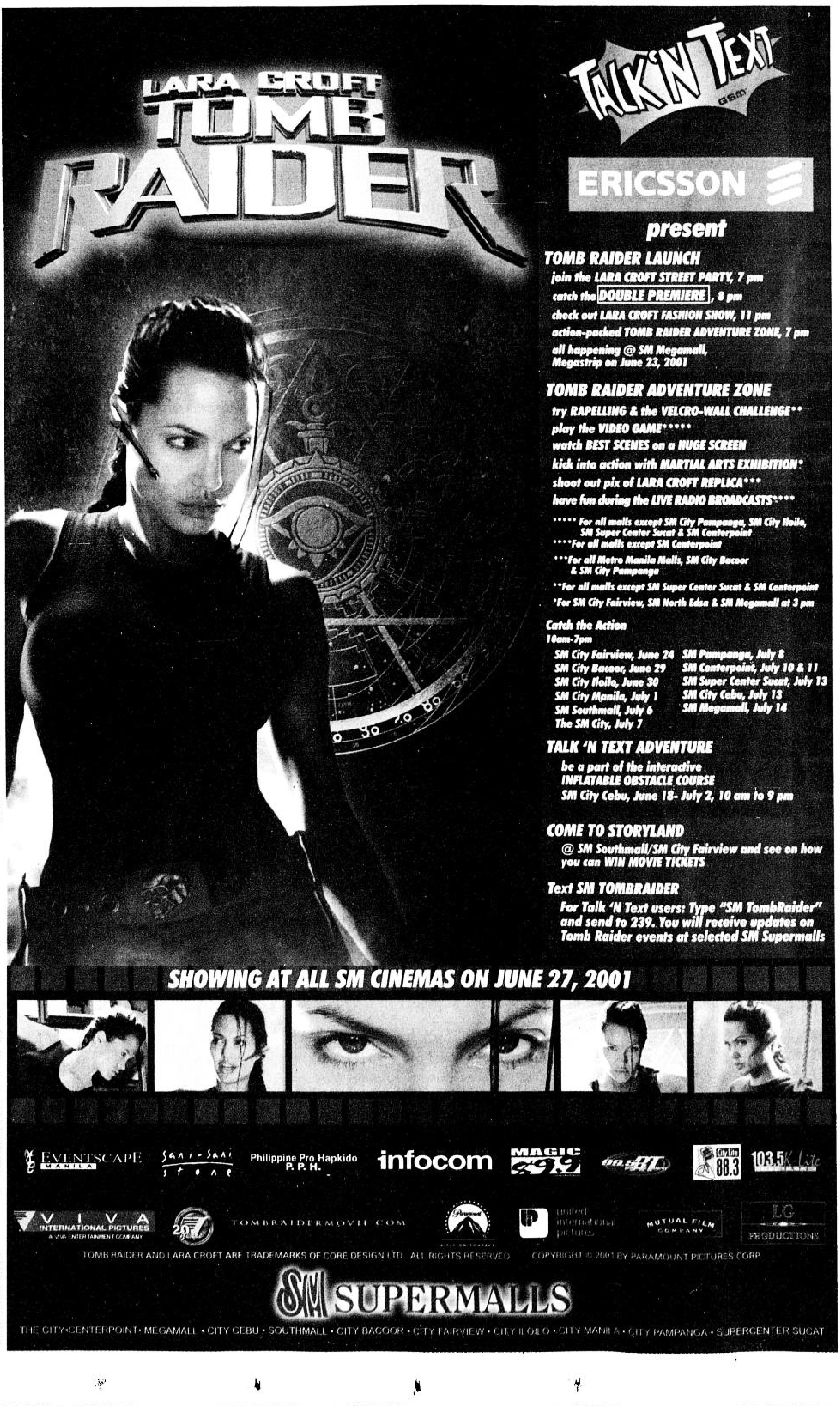
An added twist would be mega cuffs, higher than the ones we were used to.

Even the sleeves of denim jackets deserve to be cuffed up to the elbows.

Some looks can be mixed. Denim pants worn with the thick three-prong belt is a great idea. The belt will be low-slung and worn outside the belt holes due to its extra-thick width. A black equestrian jacket can also be paired with black leatherette pants, summoning a New Wave cadet feel. But do everything in moderation.

MIKE DE LA ROSA'S CLOTHES ARE AVAILABLE AT SM STORES, LANDMARK, ROBINSONS ERMITA

GEOMETRIC printed spaghetti-strapped A-line dress



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Miyake comes out with new version of scent

ISSEY Miyake made the sun and the moon meet as it recently launched its limited edition summer fragrances—L'Eau d'Issey Summer Fragrances—Soleil d'Issey and Lune d'Issey in an intimate cocktail at Rustan's Makati.

Two stars, a legendary couple of opposites, as complimentary as yin and yang, fire and water, earth and sky meet in this summer's Issey Miyake fragrance.

And it was only fitting that complementary figures were at the launch of the fragrance—Rosary Ysmael with daughter Bernice Palanca Go, Boots Moyer with Eva Abesamis, Rustan's Corporation Monty Roxas with Criselda Lontok and Rhoda Campos. Lux Asia's general manager Mia Nolasco Cuenca was also present with good friend, Rhett Eala.

Issey Miyake's product manager April Marquez opened the afternoon celebration with a short brief about the limited edition Issey Miyake Summer Fragrances.

Issey Miyake Soleil d'Issey and Lune d'Issey are available in all Rustan's Department stores.

MONTY Roxas of Rustan's Corpo-ration, Issey Miyake product manager April Marquez, Lux Asia general manager Mia Nolasco-Cuenca and Criselda Lontok

YELLOW BELLE. Be a belle with this sunflower clip.

FLORAL PICKS. Violet scoongie with daisy accents

Hair blooms

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The collection is available at the Ladies Accessories Department of all SM stores.

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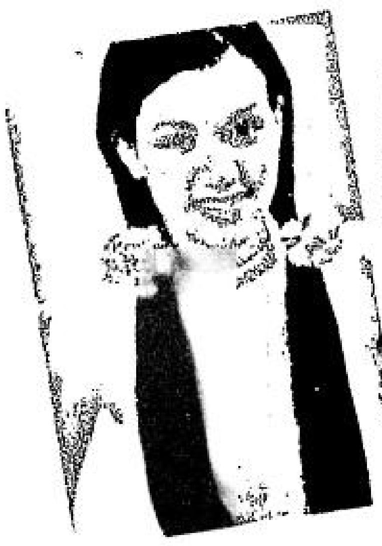

FLOWER POWER. Old rose carnation ponytail holders

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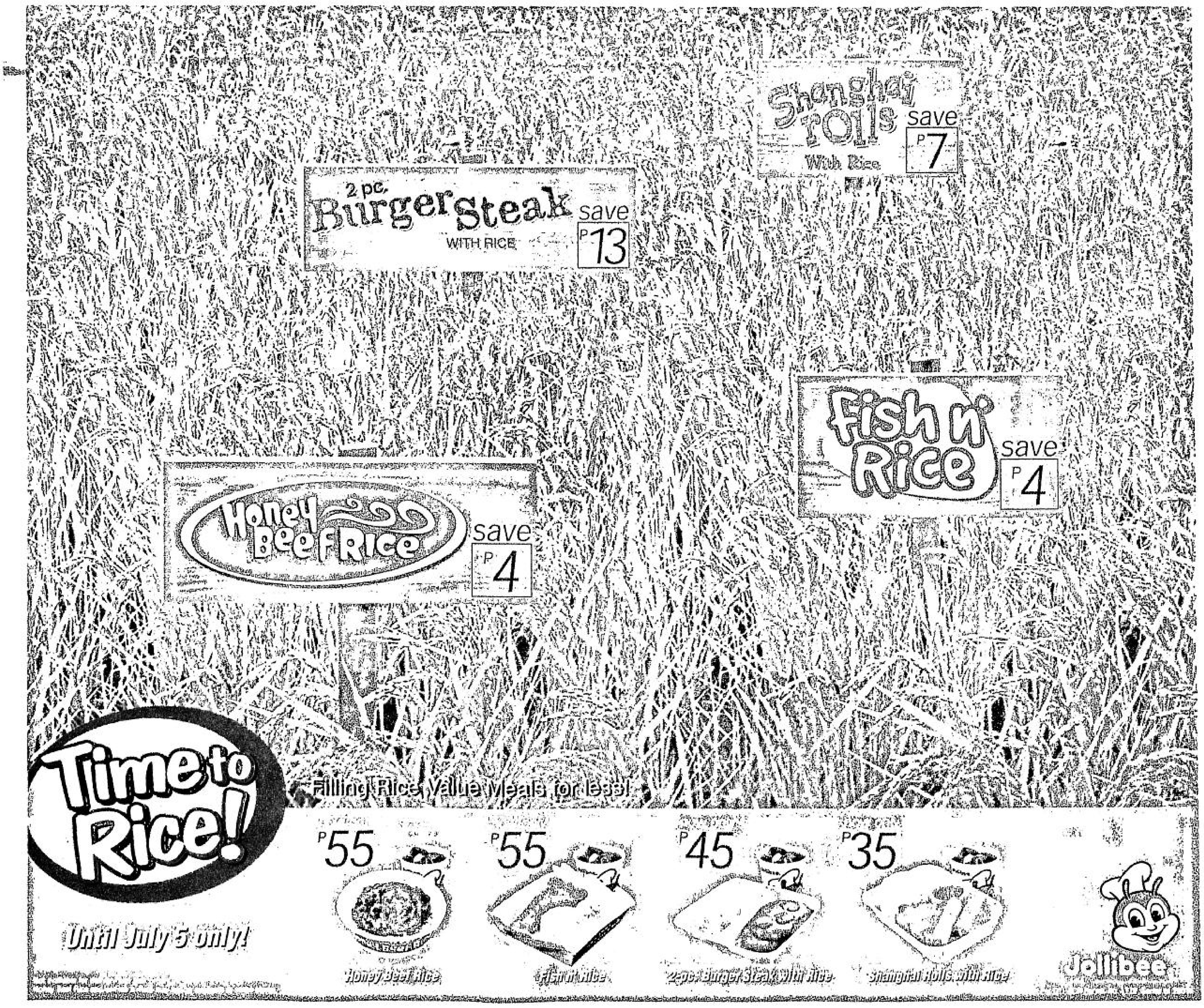

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Remembering YSL's feline Filipina

BY LORNA REVILLA MONTILLA

REMEMBER fashion model Tetta Agustin? That wide-eyed, dark and gangly tall girl with a mole on her nose who giggled at the slightest provocation? That one who sat down, humped with all her knees across her face at the lobby of Peachy Prieto's Pierre Cardin Menshoppe on Mabini Street way back when flower children romped barefooted around Malate, carrying *bayongs* filled with *sampaguita* blooms?

Tetta was also a flower child but became the first Filipino model to walk the fashion ramps of Paris under the wings of Yves Saint Laurent sometime in the middle '60s when she was barely 18 years old. She was soon on the cover of Vogue and other international fashion magazines and "was," to quote YSL, "the only fashion model who perfectly walked down the ramp like a cat." After all, she started out modeling for Filipino couturier Dante Ramirez (after a short stint as an airline steward), then well-known for discovering dark, pretty, young and tall models. (Dante is now a resident of San Francisco, California.)

And before Tetta could bloom into a real woman, the quiet, tall and dashing bon vivant, the Baron Patrick de Koenigswarter, who was then one of the most eligible bachelors in Manila, fell in love with her. He soon invited her to go to Europe with him to be introduced to the crème of fashion czars in Paris.

Tetta successfully made it there for more than 20 years, becoming rich in her own right, meeting with royalty and billionaires (like the Onassis family), and enjoying renown as one of the darlings of the European jet set.

Despite her successes, Tetta Agustin is still a simple creature. The pomposity of a world occupied by the really rich and beautiful hasn't changed her a bit although she has developed that élan, particular to the moneyed elite of Europe. Despite that Continental exposure, Tetta still laughs and cracks jokes like she has never left home. She is still from Sampaloc, after all.

Tetta Agustin modeled for the French couture masters in the 1960s and has since earned a reputation as a jet-setter and a boheme. Now she's trying to settle down, but in her inimitable version of settling down

Tough competition

Modeling in Paris is not easy amid the stiff competition so Tetta spent her money wisely and soon bought a house in London, another one on a beach in Marbella, Spain and still another in Los Angeles, California while having her mother's house in Manila renovated. The house in Paris that she acquired earlier burned down when she converted it into a dormitory for Filipino ramp-seekers who wanted to follow in her footsteps. She sold it shortly after she met Steven Wright, a true-blue Englishman whom she met at Disneyland in 1981, married in Paris, and settled down with in London. But that marriage lasted only less than four years because Tetta seemed afflicted with an incurable wanderlust which Steven couldn't understand. She was, after all, a model and a jet-setter. She was here now and there again doing real estate business with European millionaires while modeling privately for YSL, and then sitting down with opulent Arabs, selling vineyards and real estate in France all the time Steven wanted her to stay home. It's an incident she is sad about. But she easily laughs off that episode in her life.

TETTA, the free spirit

Why she left the employ of YSL to model for the House of Givenchy is another story in itself. But only Tetta can tell it in a very funny way. It seemed that she thought the grass was greener in the Givenchy pasture, so to speak. When she last modeled for YSL sometime during the early '70s as a bride in a wedding entourage, she brought a broom and a dustpan to the ramp, which was not in the script at all. It sent YSL raving mad although the crowd gave her a standing ovation. But she was fired right there and then anyway and soon found herself in the arms of Givenchy, very much to her delight. The famous Givenchy is now godfather to Tetta's only child and daughter, Tosca. And from that time on, she remains one of Givenchy's closest friends.

A lot of people don't know that Tetta can also cook. She can whip up five sumptuous dishes in a matter of hours if you want an instant party tonight. Soon after her divorce from Steven, she put up a catering service in London which was at first successful until her cook left her for America and she had to make do alone. She got exhausted and gave up the whole thing. After all, her food business hampered the pace of jet-setting and soon she was off to Los Angeles to buy herself a house while enrolling Tosca in a private Catholic school, flying back and forth to London or Paris and Los Angeles every third month of the year.

It was also about this time that she decided to have the mole on her nose taken out. She found out much to her consternation that it was cancerous although still benign. Her new face gave an added boost to her career.

Old pals

During the '80s to the early '90s, Tetta came regularly to Manila to see her family, if not to spend time with friends and former sweetheart, the Baron Patrick de K. Her closest friends come from the media and the art circle. They include Peachy Prieto Santos, Ramon Orlina, Ed Castrillo, Manny Baldemor, Margot Baterina, PDI ed in chief Letty M., Ninez Cacho Olivares and this writer who were there from the very first day Tetta walked down the local fashion ramp.

When she is in town, she seems to be everywhere. One day she would be imbibing fashion among her friends and the next day, she would be playing *patintero* on a Batangas beach. The day after, she would be seen having a tête-à-tête with Uncle Rey at Kamayan restaurant, sucking *guinataang kuhol*, which is our succulent version of escargot. It's her favorite dish after T-bone steak, medium rare. And nights would find her having dinner with intimate friends, while rolling down on the floor, wine glass in one hand, telling amusing episodes in her life. Tetta is really funny when she tells us all the absurd things that happened to her in Europe when she was a fashion model.

Back in Paris in a party in the summer of 1999, she met good-looking, middle-aged, suave Christian Bavery, a Frenchman with uncommon continental flair, whom they say is rich as rich could be. He got smitten with her at first sight. But it was time to go back to Los Angeles to look after Tosca. And so started the passionate telephone calls from France every hour on the hour from early morning to past midnight (I was there with her at the time) that kept Tetta sleepless and worn out for several weeks.

Christian seems to be the man after Tetta's heart. A man who loves her dearly and would give her everything she wanted as long as she stayed close to him. He is from Lyon, France, and is said to be the second richest man of that historic town. It is known that he has vast holdings in computer companies at the Silicon Valley in California, stocks worth millions in a few big Euro business firms and real estate in some parts of France. These things, however, do not move Tetta a bit. It is Christian's sincerity that touches her deeply.

New glow

Giving in to his pleadings, Tetta soon joined Christian in France last Christmas with daughter Tosca. But after the Yuletide season she had to take Tosca back to Los Angeles for school but this time, not without Christian tagging along with her.

Tetta went back to Los Angeles in the arms of Christian Bavery wearing a glow and sporting a new hairdo, dyed bloody crimson, and deliciously a few pounds slimmer. She took Christian around to visit with friends in Lalaland and when Valentine's Day came, he quietly bought her a brand-new Mercedes Benz 600, although she has her own brand-new Camry, which she drives around Hollywood with friends.

Spring sent them to Bangkok to buy some things for a trousseau while sightseeing to boot. Back in France last April, soon after Christian bought her a villa in Nice, they soon decided to go on a summer tour by cruising in a stretch car to Spain. They enjoyed sun, sand and surf along Costa del Sol, Barcelona, Granada, Alhambra, Toledo, on to Madrid and Zaragoza, then back to Marbella where she has a beach house. Tetta has, until now, postponed wedding plans although the trousseau is ready anytime.

Christian and Tetta are now back in Lyon after enrolling Tosca in a finishing school in Switzerland. (She is now in high school.) She plans to settle down with Christian in Nice and spend holidays in Los Angeles in between their European sojourns meanwhile suspending marriage and all its responsibilities.

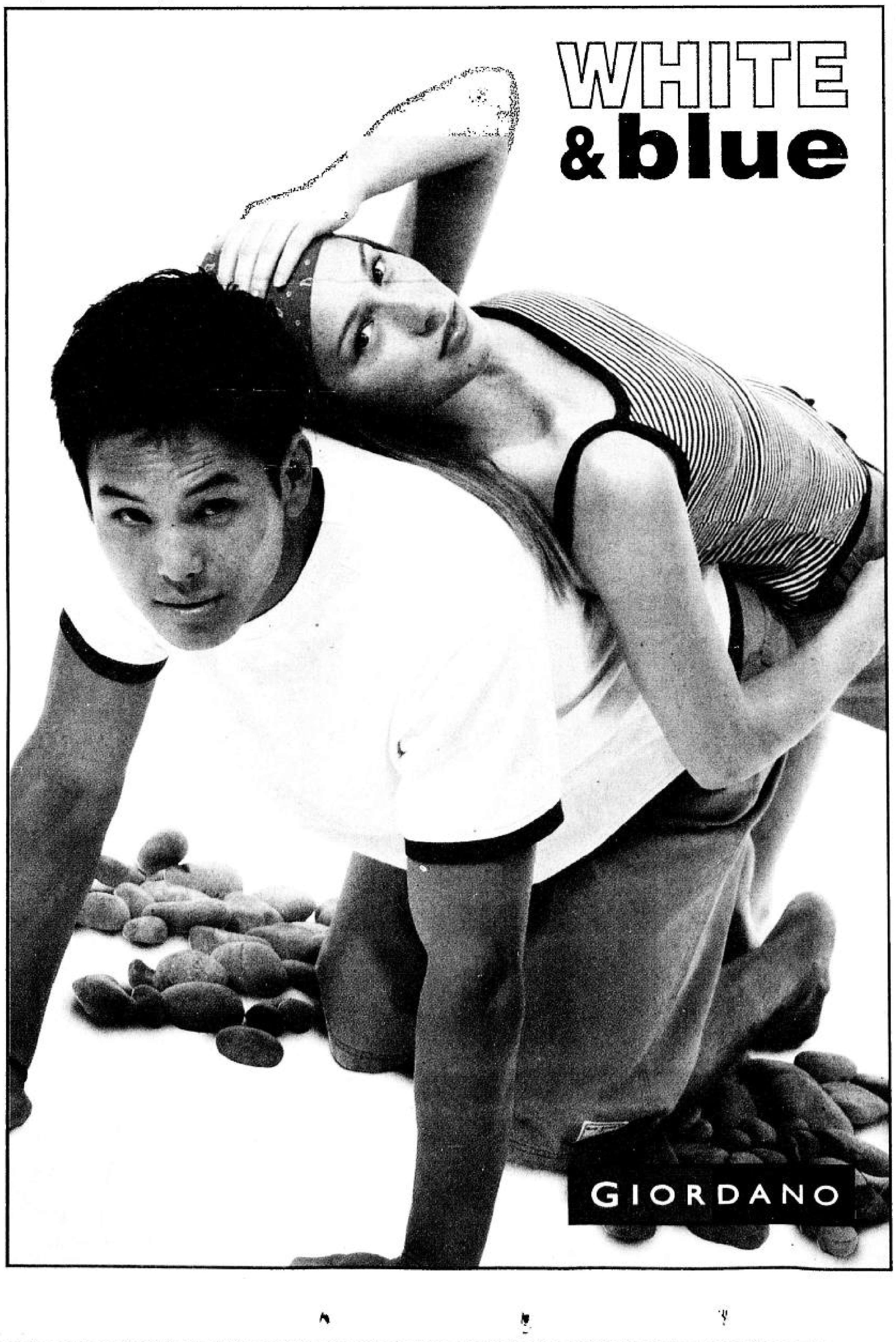
"Marriage is not important right now," she winks, "seeing how fragile it is over here." Tetta prefers to live it in, in a rather grandiose way. "The laughing parties are over for me. I think it's time for me to settle down. I've never met a man like Christian whose generosity is astounding. I want to show him my gratitude by doing what he likes me to do, except marry me."

The boheme in Tetta is still there. And Christian seems patient enough to wait until she changes her mind about marriage.

"I've never felt so loved in my life," she says, "but I don't think I'm ready for another one. It doesn't seem to be the norm here anymore. I feel it's much sweeter to be single and free." Christian seems disappointed but says he'll never give up until she decides to walk down the aisle with him.

"It may take months, perhaps years," says one of her closest friends, psychiatrist Dr. Peter Galagar in Lalaland, "for Tetta to make up her mind. After all, she is enjoying life to its fullest. Marriage might just spoil the fun she has with Christian."

Agree, but methinks there's something more to it than meets the eye.



The hair-raising youth and zest of Fabian Provost

BY MARGIE T. ESTRELLA

FRANCK Provost gives a familiar name a new twist with Fabio Salsa Salon. Located at the Power Plant Mall in Rockwell, Fabio Salsa opens its doors to Asia for the first time. And while Franck Provost has made a name for himself here in the Philippines, his son Fabian is quickly following in his footsteps. Young and energetic, Fabian is the poster child for Fabio Salsa.

One would think that at 26, Fabian is only starting out in his career as a hairstylist. But luckily, his calling came much earlier. When Fabian was 19, he decided to give cutting and styling a chance and has been at it ever since. Seven years have passed since then, and he now has the added responsibility and privilege of creating the annual hair images for Fabio Salsa Salons as well as Franck Provost Salons worldwide.

Quick visit

He was in Manila for less than a week but was able to give the local scene a demonstration of his work. Surely it takes a lot more than a fancy name and a French accent to create a proper hairstyle and execute a great cut. Fabian was able to do both in less then 10 minutes.

In front of a skeptical audience, he quickly gave ABS-CBN newscaster Trisha Salvador a complete hair makeover. His speed merely enhanced his skill and artistry. Since Fabian performs an average of 20-30 haircuts a day on a regular basis, the cliché "practice makes perfect" is quite appropriate in his case. His salon, Fabio Salsa, wants to emphasize its quick but superior service.

Part of the reason the salon came to be is that people on the go need a place to have their haircut amid the frenetic pace of life. Even though there are many good salons here in the Philippines, only a few of them are salons where one can get primped and pampered. Fabio Salsa wants to cater to those who are looking to save time.

Amicable setting

Fabian also envisioned Fabio Salsa to be friendly salon. Its interior is bright, colorful and welcoming. One of the things Fabian wanted was to create a non-intimidating atmosphere. Anyone is free to come in at any time since service is granted on a first come, first served basis. Fabian not only wants to satisfy his clients' hair needs, but he also wants to have pleasant rapport with them. Back home in Paris, when he is not in the studio for photo shoots, he tries as much as possible to stay in his salon so he's always in contact with the staff and the customers.

Unfortunately, being a hairstylist and running a salon can be quite difficult at times. As much as Fabian loves his job, every now and then he encounters some snags. With more than 20 salon branches throughout Europe, it's not easy to carefully oversee each and every salon so finding the right staff is important. Moreover, there may arise an occasion when a customer is not completely satisfied with the outcome of their hairstyle or hair color. When these problems arise, he tries his best to repair the problem by correcting and giving the other stylists constructive criticism. If a customer is unhappy with the results, Fabian will try to remedy the color or change the style to satisfy the customer.

The son of Franck Provost has come into his own and just opened the Manila branch of his growing Fabio Salsa Salon

But the problems are more than a fair trade since his job also allows him to travel around the world and meet interesting people. Most of all, Fabian loves to cut hair, especially women's. He understands that women have a particular attachment to their hair and won't let just anybody fool around with it. Therefore, when a woman walks into his salon for a cut, Fabian is thrilled that she is willing to trust him with her hair.

Management style

Fabian likes to run his salon in the same manner as his father. He doesn't want to give his staff the impression that he is the boss. Rather he wants to be considered approachable and seen as another member of the team, not the leader.

Letting the staff know that he is part of his crew enables him to reach out to his staff on a more congenial level. The salon personnel are not inhibited to ask him for helpful pointers. He says, "I would prefer to be respected for my job and expertise, not my title." Fabian's approach to management is, in a way, a reflection of his values. Throughout the interview he underscores several times the significance of family and respect. For him, these are easily reflected in his company since these are innate principles that automatically emerge when he is on the job.

As open as he is, Fabian cannot name one particular virtue that he has. But he says he looks for simplicity in other people. He has a great appreciation for down-to-earth people and those who don't like to make things more complicated than they are. Fabian himself is quite easy-going and it's not surprising that he likes to be in the company of people who are willing to laugh at life just like him.

Now that Fabio Salsa has made its way here in the Philippines, what are Fabian Provost's plans? He'd like to introduce his salon to everyone and hopefully make Fabio Salsa one of the top salons in Manila and throughout Asia. After that, well, even he can't see that far ahead.

FABIAN Provost gives Trisha Salvador a makeover.

New market-testing methods for small businesses

CONSUMER-ORIENTED companies go to great lengths to get an idea of how the market will accept new products and their services. Big multinational companies will use a big chunk of their promotions and advertising budgets to market-test their products.

Until recently, such methods were reserved for big companies with nine-digit advertising budgets. A popular trend now, utilized mostly by small- to medium-scale businesses, is the participation in trade expositions and shopping bazaars. This method is a less expensive yet highly effective means of gaining direct insights from their target. By gathering manufacturers and consumers together, expositions and bazaars are getting more and more acknowledged as a venue for testing the newest products in the market.

Veteran participants of shopping bazaars and trade expositions namely, Folded & Hung, manufacturers and importers of hip lines of clothing and various accessories; Carolina's Lace Shoppe, producers of trendy bags and exquisite shawls; Leslie's Children's Wear, makers of smocked children's garments; Play & Display, carriers of tasteful home furnishings and accessories; and Soul-Craft, makers of scented candles have already made it big and extended their showrooms in malls and commercial establishments. By joining bazaars, these entrepreneurs were able to get immediate feedback from direct consumers, leading to high confidence level of market acceptance.

With this line of thinking and such goals in mind, businessmen and nongovernment organizations strike a perfect combination in staging such productive activities. This year, through the efforts of the Bantayog ng mga Bayani Foundation, headed by its chair, former senator Jovito R. Salonga, and CUT Unlimited Inc., led by its president, Mayose G. Bautista, shall conduct two Christmas shopping bazaars as well as a holiday shopping exposition as its culminating activity.

Noel Christmas Bazaars is set on Oct. 14-15 (Part 1) and Dec. 15-16 (Part 2) at the premier shopping venue of the Manila Polo Club while Christmas@2001 is scheduled on Dec. 1-2 at the massive location of the World Trade Center. Moreover, these are uniquely planned to be the most excellent pool of high-quality products.

Proceeds of these affairs will benefit the projects of the Bantayog ng mga Bayani Foundation which has dedicated itself to honoring martyrs who gave their lives for freedom, truth and justice. Manufacturers, suppliers, importers, exporters and entrepreneurs are urged to book as early as possible before booth spaces run out. Call 371-7398, 373-3601 local 216, telefax 371-7405 or e-mail eventsonly@edsamail.com.ph.

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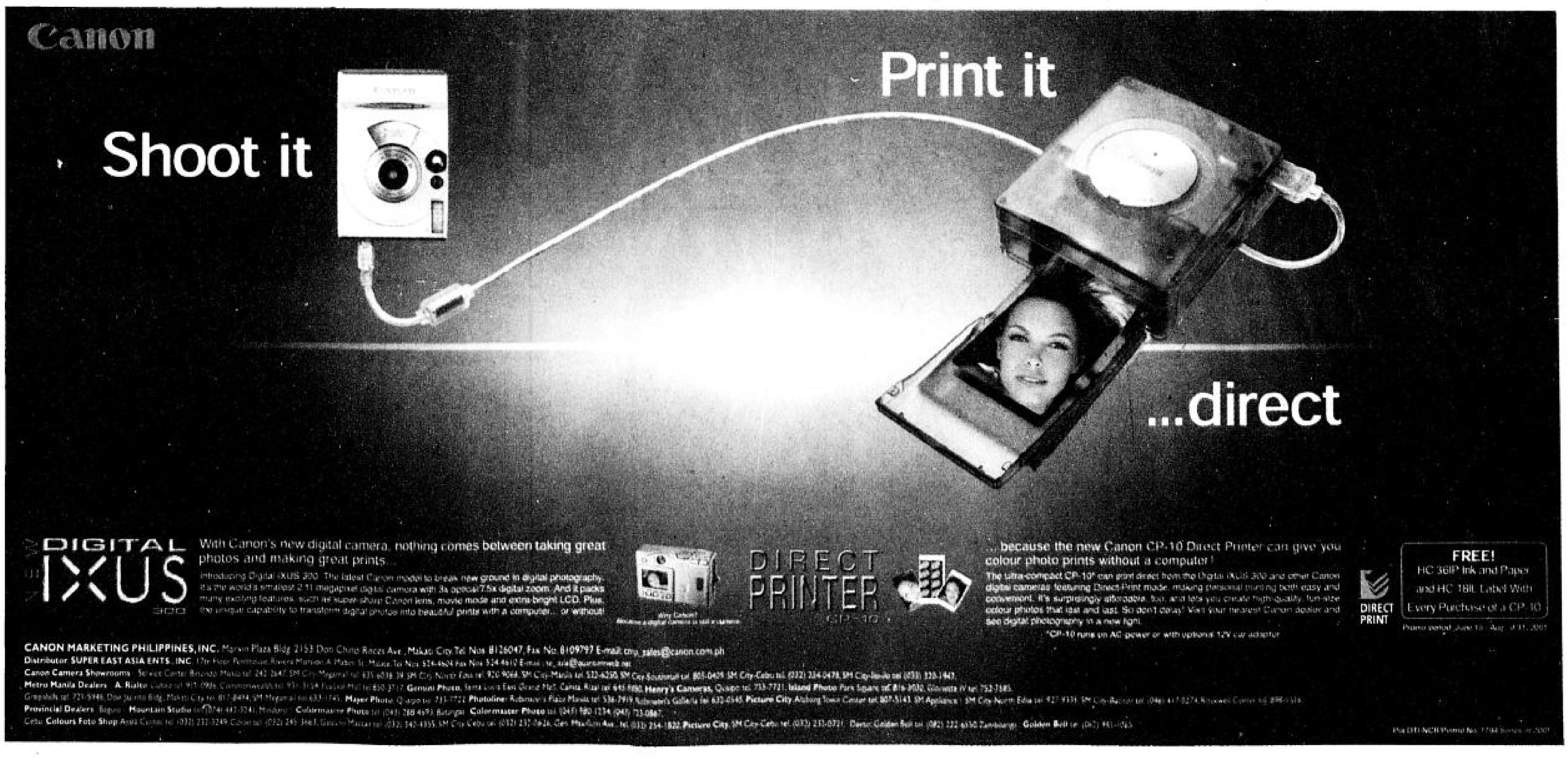

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MAKE waves with this halter top

To experiment is Human

THE SHIRTS are not shrinking violets.

(From page D1)

more female customers.

"Women have more time to experiment with clothes than men," observes Chan. This explains why Kristina Cassandra Concepcion was chosen as its image model.

"She is adventurous in dressing up. When I met her, I liked her style. She's been coming to Human," he says.

Chan popularized celebrity endorsement in ready-to-wear. Previously other competitors claimed they could sell their label by using unknown faces. In the end, they joined the bandwagon by getting movie stars to tout their products.

The celebrity endorsement has been a surefire hit since Richard Gomez modeled for Bench. In the underwear category, Jomari Yllana got briefs flying off the shelves. Eventually, Cesar Montano, Carlos Agassi and Jericho Rosales followed suit, modeling for other brands.

With KC as Human's spokesperson, there are high hopes for the clothes to move faster.

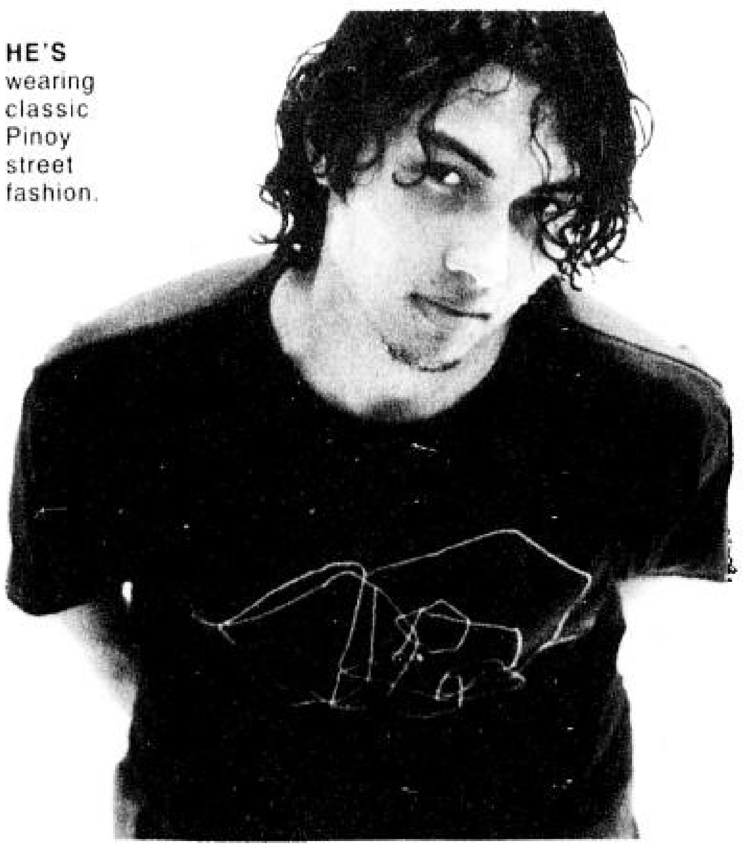
For this pictorial, John Mossige of Cal Carrie International used high-contrast images to project the edgy personality of Human.

MAKEUP BY KRIST BANSUELO
MODELS: KATHLENE HILARO AND RAYMUND MORENTE
FROM CAL CARRIE INTERNATIONAL MODELS PHILS.

HEART-TUGGING casuals

DIAMOND patterns are forever.

ZIP-UP shirt jacket with shirt underneath



HE'S wearing classic Pinoy street fashion.

UK brand launched

ARCADIO Group's managing director Nigel Hall

BRITISH Ambassador Alan Collins

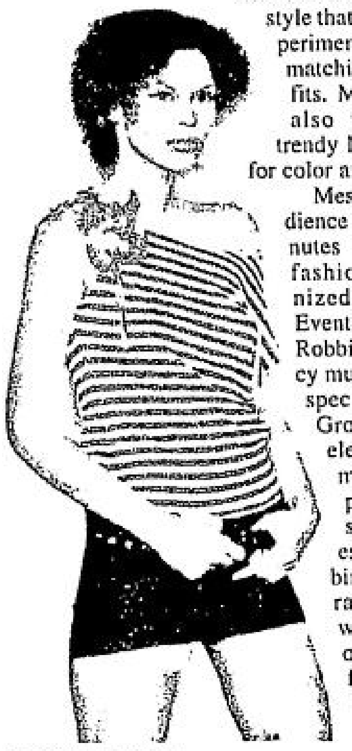
FREDERICK Go, Luli Macapagal Arroyo, Robina Gokongwei-Pe

THE COLORFUL decade we fondly recall as the '80s is hot again. Minus the shoulder pads and leg warmers, the fashion of the '80s is ruling the catwalk and the window displays once more. Say hello to candy-colored garments, dirty denims, asymmetrical cuts, scallop hemlines and Glam Rock T-shirts—this is the '80s as interpreted by Topshop, Topman and Miss Selfridge.

Three of UK's best-selling line of clothing, Topshop, Topman and Miss Selfridge, recently opened its first store here in the Philippines at Robinsons Place Manila with a high-energy fashion show cum launch. Attended by the well-heeled and best-dressed of Manila's society and entertainment circles, Topshop's opening attracted the likes of Tina Maristela-Ocampo and husband Ricco Ocampo, Myrza Sison, Maya Calica, Mia Fausto, VJ Amanda Griffin, Tetta Ortiz-Matera, Robina Gokongwei-Pe, Rafael Rosell, Luigi Muhlach, MTV VJ Sarah Meier and even Presidential daughter Luli Macapagal Arroyo.

Young and trendy just like the clothes in Topshop, Clara Balaguer and Ed Feist hosted the event. They also gave out special prizes for the Topshop girl, Topman and Miss Selfridge of the night. Nigel Hall, managing director of the Arcadia Group in UK, and British Ambassador Alan Collins gave short but inspiring speeches. The Arcadia Group owns and manages Topshop, Topman and Miss Selfridge lines in UK as well as a hundred other successful brands. In fact, Topshop on Oxford Street, London is considered to be the biggest fashion store in the world with its 9,000-sq-m fashion space.

Topshop caters to the young ladies whose taste runs from the classic all the way to the edgy and funky pieces. Topman is for the young gentleman with attitude and a sense of style that is willing to experiment in mixing and matching certain outfits. Miss Selfridge is also for the young trendy ladies who thirst for color and attention.


'80S Punk Look

Mesmerizing the audience for a full 30 minutes was a fabulous fashion show organized by Summit Events and directed by Robbie Carmona. Racy music from the UK specially mixed by Groove Nation fueled Manila's top models as they pouted and sashayed down the escalators of Robinsons Padre Faura wing, which were used in lieu of a catwalk, and flanked by two wide screens. Thanks to ZA Cosmetics and stylists Ignacio Loyola, Noni Daza, Bea Albert and Lotho, the models were enthralling in every look.

Topshop featured different looks. The camouflage-military look was a hit with the crowd. Fatigue mini skirts, khaki shirtdresses, olive green polo shirts matched with black hot pants were daring and sexy. Then there was the monochrome line—red and white and black and white combinations of geometric prints, asymmetrically cut flowing blouses and party dresses and floral printed cocktail dresses highlighted femininity and sex appeal.

The teens were delighted with the American sport look. Bright, candy-colored tops, rainbow striped tees, knee-length denim skirts, hooded cotton sweats, layered hot colored tank tops and jerseys were visible for the all-American girl. Jeans and layered tops, numbered cotton tees and football jackets was the attraction for the all-American guy.

Miss Selfridge, with its trendy approach to fashion, had the girls crazy over sweet floral and ditsy prints in striking colors of fuchsia, hot pink, neon yellow and diva red. Spray-painted denims topped with silk shirts with floral accent, scallop-designed asymmetrical mini skirts, fuchsia faux leather dresses with animal print as well as striped sabrina tees were a big hit as well.

Topshop also unveiled sexy, dark colored tank tops with naughty graffiti designs, slinky tops accented with cuffs and safety pins, studded denims and micro-minis for gals. For the men, Topman featured khaki shorts, fitting tank tops and dirty denim jackets marked with the latest and must-have accessory—the dog tag.

Topshop is located at the 2/F Padre Faura Wing, Robinsons Place Manila.

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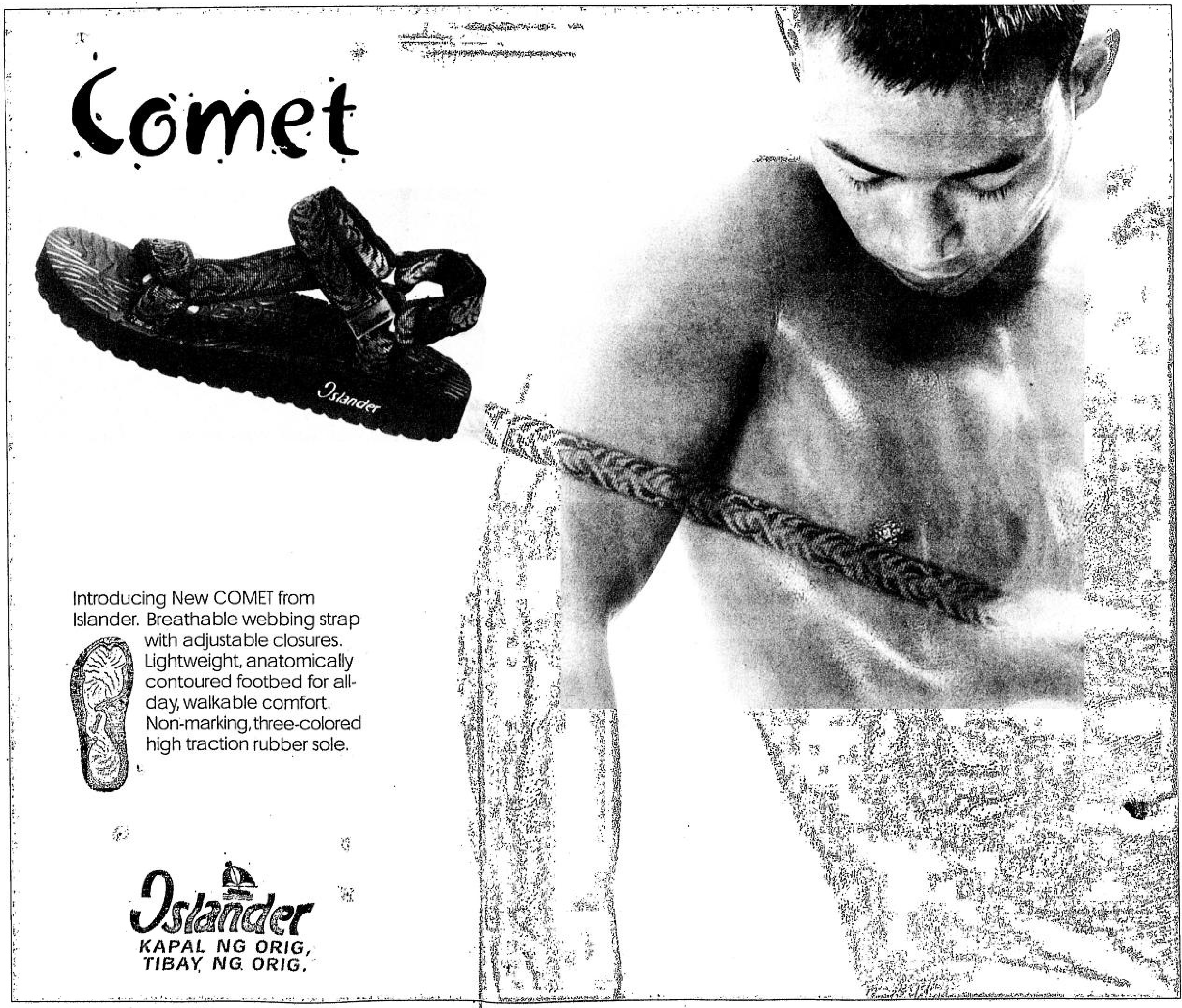
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10. Boris Razon
11. Christopher Hernandez
12. John Erwin Hernandez

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3. Tyron Tei
4. LJ Perez
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WHAT'S UP, DOC? Printed halter top overlapped by a black silk skirt and embroidered manton with Anne Klein cobweb shoes

Michelle, our girl

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(Story on page E6)

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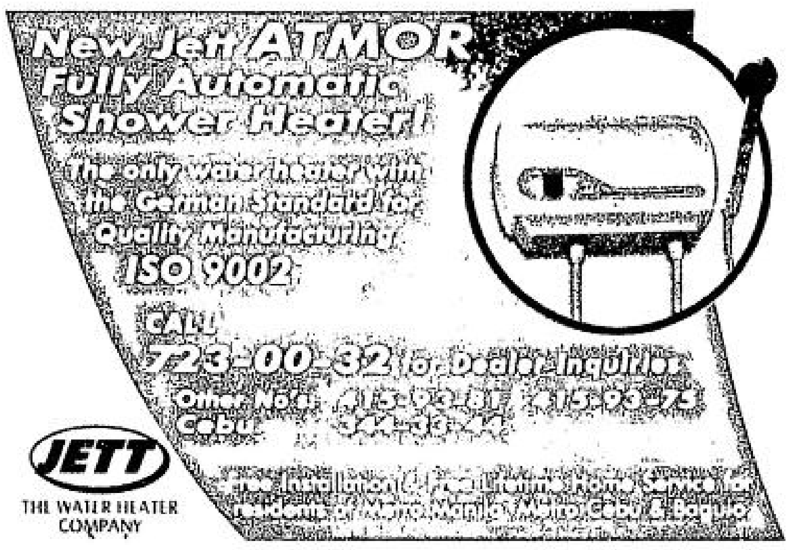

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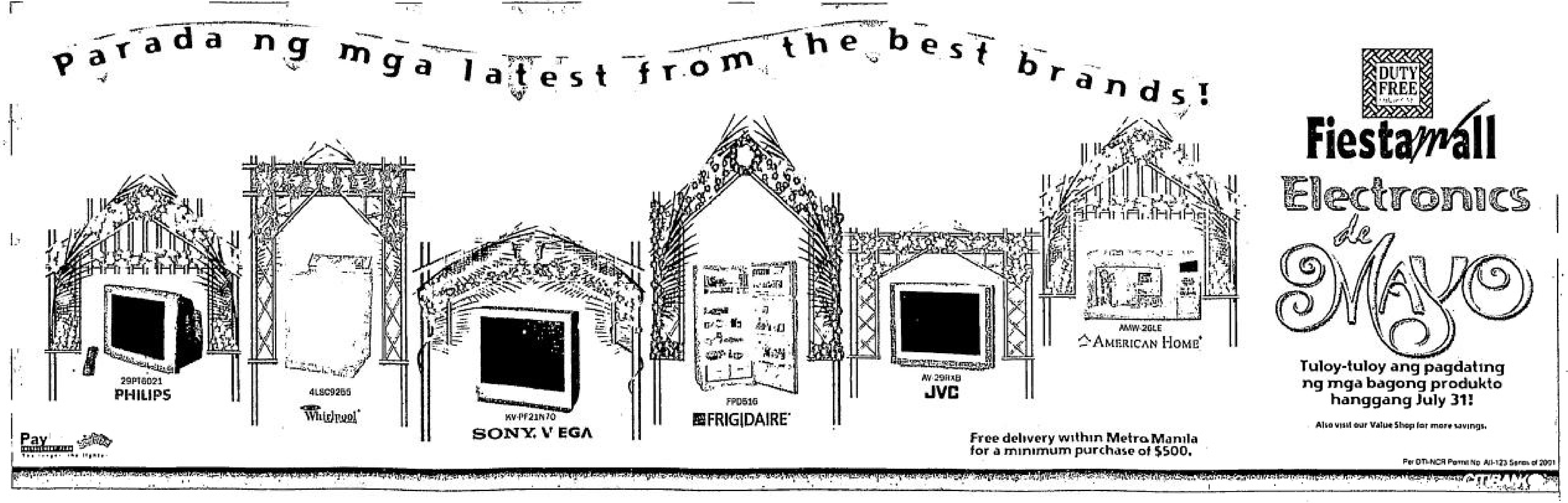

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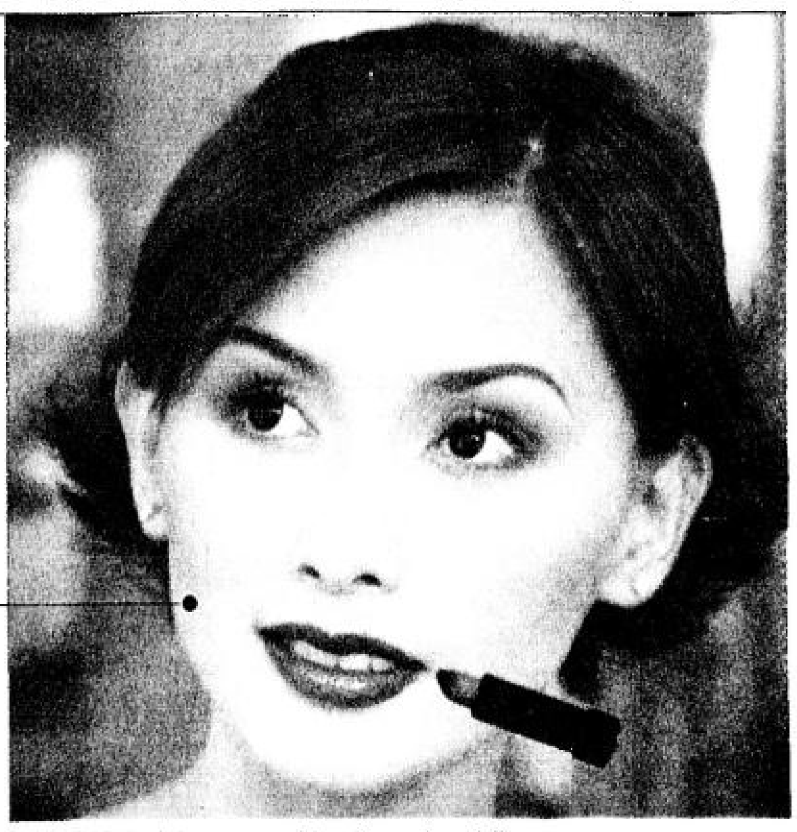
Go brazen

AVON Trend Line comes up with the "Disco Queen" collection of fashion-forward lip, eyeshadow and cheek colors.

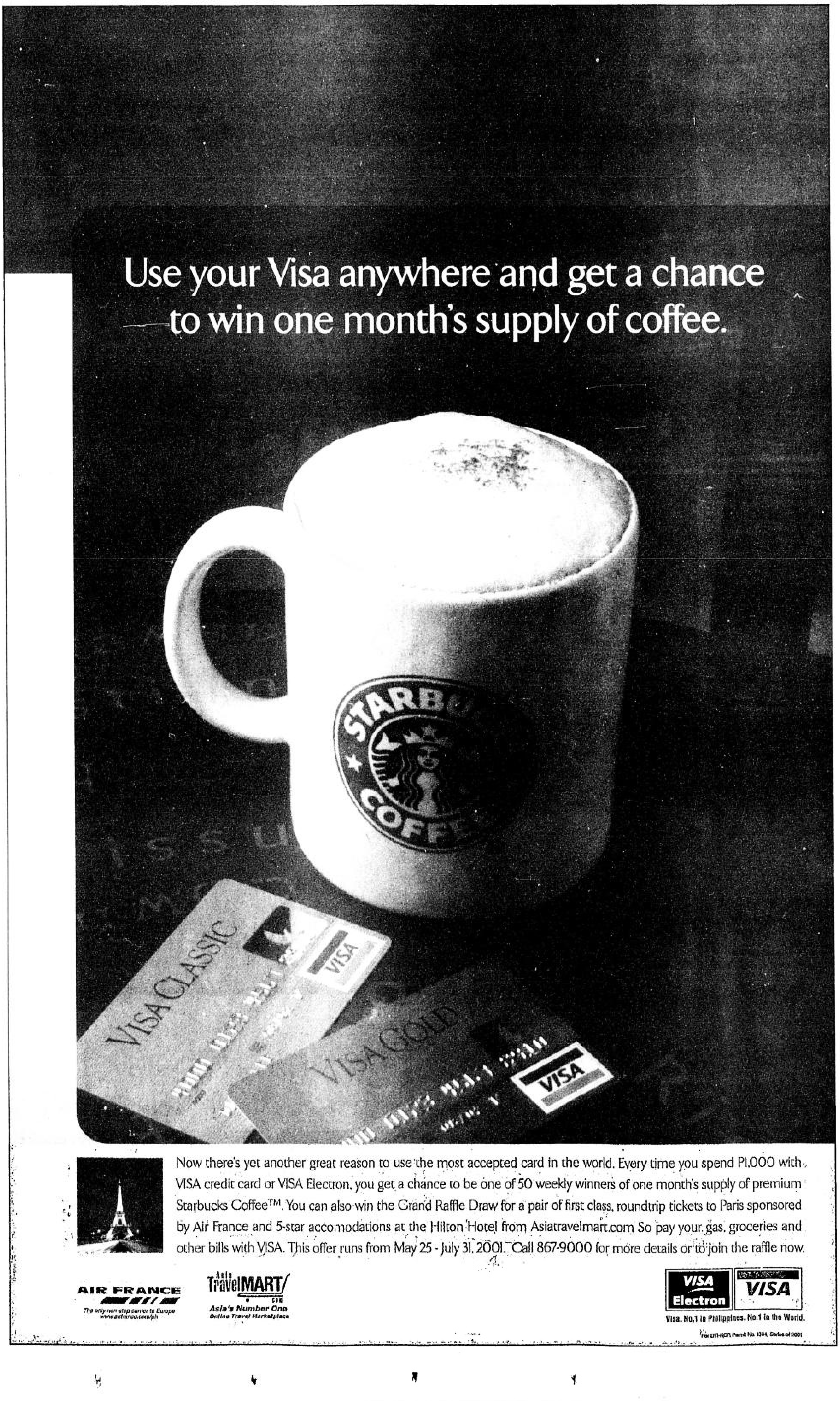
Forecasting the return of '70s glam, Trend Line declares bronzy gold colors as the big news of the season. Bask in the glow of these golden highlights from the powder blush duo, featuring the aptly-named shades Dancing Queen and Night Fever. Remember to match the look with stylish gold details and accessories on those disco togs! True-blue disco royalty, on the other hand, lay on the whole look—from glowing blushes to Trend Line's eyeshadow duo in glamorous shades called Studio 54 and Disco Fever. Raise the temperature a bit more with the special 25 percent off introductory offer on the eyeshadow and blush duos. Finally, finish the look with sassy, flashy lipcolors such as Red Hot & Dance, Studio 54, Vino, Matte Royal, Sienna Red and Burgundy—all set to dazzle the dance floor at a special buy one, take one offer.

PHOTOS BY CHITO VECINA
MODEL: MICHELLE QUIZON
HAIR AND MAKEUP BY TOTO AND JAIME RUBEN BAGAMASBAD

REMEMBER the exaggerated cheeks of the '70s?



BALANCE violet eyes with wine-colored lips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Rejuvenate with Vitamin C

LA PRAIRIE enhances Vitamin C's powers of rejuvenation in C Energy Cellular Serum. This powerful nighttime formula contains a concentrated form of Vitamin C that recharges and revitalizes the skin. Vitamin C in the C Energy Cellular Serum functions as a shield for the skin and an anti-oxidant which can give 24-hour protection. It scavenges for free radicals and unstable single oxygen molecules to strengthen the skin's natural defense system and stimulate collagen formation that firm up the skin.The C Energy Cellular Serum blends Vitamin C, with La Prairie's patented Cellular Complex, an added energizing ingredient which magnifies the formula's restorative powers. It also contains Co-Enzyme Q10, a natural ingredient, and Perfluorodecalin, a polymer, both needed for cell respiration.

DETAILS

The C Energy Cellular Serum works with a sleeping body to help rebuild the skin's defense system and restore its healthy vitality and firmness. Applied topically, it prepares the skin to fight external stress and free-radical damage. It corrects uneven skin pigmentation and helps fade age spots thus visibly brightening skin and restoring youthful radiance.

The C Energy Cellular Serum comes in a lightweight gel formula easily absorbed by the skin. It is packaged in an amber-colored airless pump dispenser that preserves the effectiveness of the formula and protects it from heat, light and oxygen.

La Prairie products are available only at Rustan's.

Estee Lauder's skin-care regimen

ESTEE Lauder reaches out to nature to create a new skin-care regimen for all skin types. The cosmetic giant pampers the skin with the Vitachlorella Bar and two types of Skin Action Treatment Lotions to nourish and refresh the face.

The Estee Lauder regimen starts with the Vitachlorella Bar which contains a high concentration of Chlorella, a fresh-water green algae known as the world's oldest plant. Chlorelia gives the cleansing bar ability to revitalize the skin as well as protect it from free radicals and strengthen it to fight the effects of stress. The Vitachlorella Bar contains 30 times the moisture ingredients of ordinary soaps which is why it leaves the skin soft and smooth.

After cleansing, one has the option of using either of two Skin Action Treatment Lotions depending on one's skin type. Estee Lauder's Skin Action Treatment Lotion is available for combination skin as well as normal to dry skin. The lotion replenishes moisture which is most often lost during cleansing. Cornflower extract in the lotion's formulation treats inflamed and irritated areas while elder extract improves blood circulation. The Skin Action Treatment Lotion also improves the rate of cell turnover which will allow the skin to better absorb subsequently applied products.

Quick fix for cough and cold

ORIGINS, a brand known for finding alternative solutions to age-old problems, offers four new products that relieve common cold and cough symptoms. These four products form part of Origins' Sensory Therapy, which helps treat cold and allergies.

Open for Business is a steamy nasal soother which contains natural Australian eucalyptus and oil of pine needles that give out a pleasing and calming effect to the mind and body. It also has camphor, artemsia, caraway, spearmint, lavender, rosemary and menthol.

Off Your Chest vaporising balm is a petroleum-free formula that contains a blend of essential oils extracted from peppermint to soothe clogged nose and itchy throat. It also penetrates deep into the skin to radiate warmth and stimulate circulation.

Don't Be Stuffy is a non-aerosol spray containing an essential oil blend that soothes nasal passages to allow one to breathe comfortably. The formula contains the invigorating oil of wintergreen that helps clear the head when one is under the weather. Spray it on the pillow or all over your room or unto tissue for soothing daytime comfort. Don't Be Stuffy easily washes off from fabrics and leaves no stain.

Cold War is a honey elixir which can be added to tea or plain hot water for a delicious soothing brew that warms and soothes the throat. One can also take a spoonful of this formula which contains honey base of clover and wildflower' peppermint and elderflowers that relieves itchy throat.

All items are available at Rustans.

New oral beauty product hits the market

By Harriet Ann Dy

FIRST, there was Imedeen. Then came Cellasene. Now comes Envie, "the beauty pill."

As if there is not enough topical creams and what-have-yous in the retail market today, newer oral beauty supplements are adding on to crowded shelves. In fact, according to Edward Lieskovan, president of the Performance Research Laboratories and the pharmaceutical hand behind Envie, oral products are poised to become the next big beauty trend.

In fact, in a report posted online, writer Mary Mihaly affirms that there will be "a new emphasis on 'beauty on the inside,' focusing on oral health and beauty supplements. We will finally come to focus on prevention, rather than cure, especially in skin care and youth-enhancing products."

Prevention, indeed, is perhaps the single most oft-repeated word mouthed by Dr. Lieskovan during our hour-long conversation at Saisaki in Megamall. The tanned pharmacist—who, at 43, still climbs mountains as a hobby—was in town to lecture the product to doctors of the University of Santo Tomas.

"There is a trend toward people wanting to do spectacular things and have a youthful attitude even when they're older," he says. "They want to enjoy that quality of life."

Slowing down ageing

Enter Envie, a specialty supplement with natural substances that promises to "help the body fortify itself and slow the aging process."

First developed in late 1995, this tiny pill contains more than 20 "skin-enhancing" ingredients like grape seed extract, beta carotene, Vitamin C and E and green tea, which work as antioxidants, as well as collagen support nutrients to maintain the skin's elasticity. The first version was released in 1997; a more stable dosage with purified ingredients developed not long after.

The product was then rolled out to Indonesia and is currently sold at select US states, Mexico, China, India and, early this year, the Philippines. "We found out that it was most effective in sunny environments," says Dr. Lieskovan.

While response has been warm, some people are understandably skeptical about ingesting a pill to look better. "Because the skin acts as a barrier, if topical creams are not designed well, the skin won't allow some of its ingredients into the skin," he explains. "The key to beauty is being able to get the nutrients deeper into the skin."

Prevention

Although the process of developing this type of supplementation is relatively young—Imedeen, for example, is roughly a decade-old—Dr. Lieskovan believes that oral products are here to stay. "The current health system focuses more on diagnosing a disease but we want to focus more on prevention," he says. "This is all about developing a preventative approach. We're in an age where we're focusing more on the need for vitamins."

Which is exactly how Envie is marketing itself: a curative and therapeutic choice created to help enhance, and yes, heal, the skin. Ingredients like Cymogen and Numarine, a protein, promise to heal "damage that has already occurred."

In the FAQ distributed to the seminar attendees, Envie is recommended for children as young as 12. Results can be seen in as little as 10 days for some, and a month at the most. People suffering from acne problems can also take Envie; they recommend two pills a day for those with severe cases.

"This is the future," says Dr. Lieskovan of preventative medicine. Although it will definitely not replace traditional medicine anytime soon, he notes that there is a growing trend among drug companies buying up nutritional supplement companies to prepare themselves for this new trend. "Competition will prod companies to use pharmaceutical-style screening vis-à-vis libraries of raw materials and active ingredients, ushering a new era of cosmetic pharmaceuticals," writes Mihaly.

One thing's for sure in all these development though: oral supplements are here to stay.

E-mail the author at chinachix@hotmail.com

A beauty pill a day keeps the wrinkles away, say such oral medications as Envie

Chanel introduces bath range

CHANEL No. 5 aficionados will welcome the chance to prolong the pleasure of the fragrance with the introduction of three new complementary products. The Chanel No. 5 Bath and Body Range includes the Essential Bath Oil, Sheer Moisture Mist and Hair Mist.

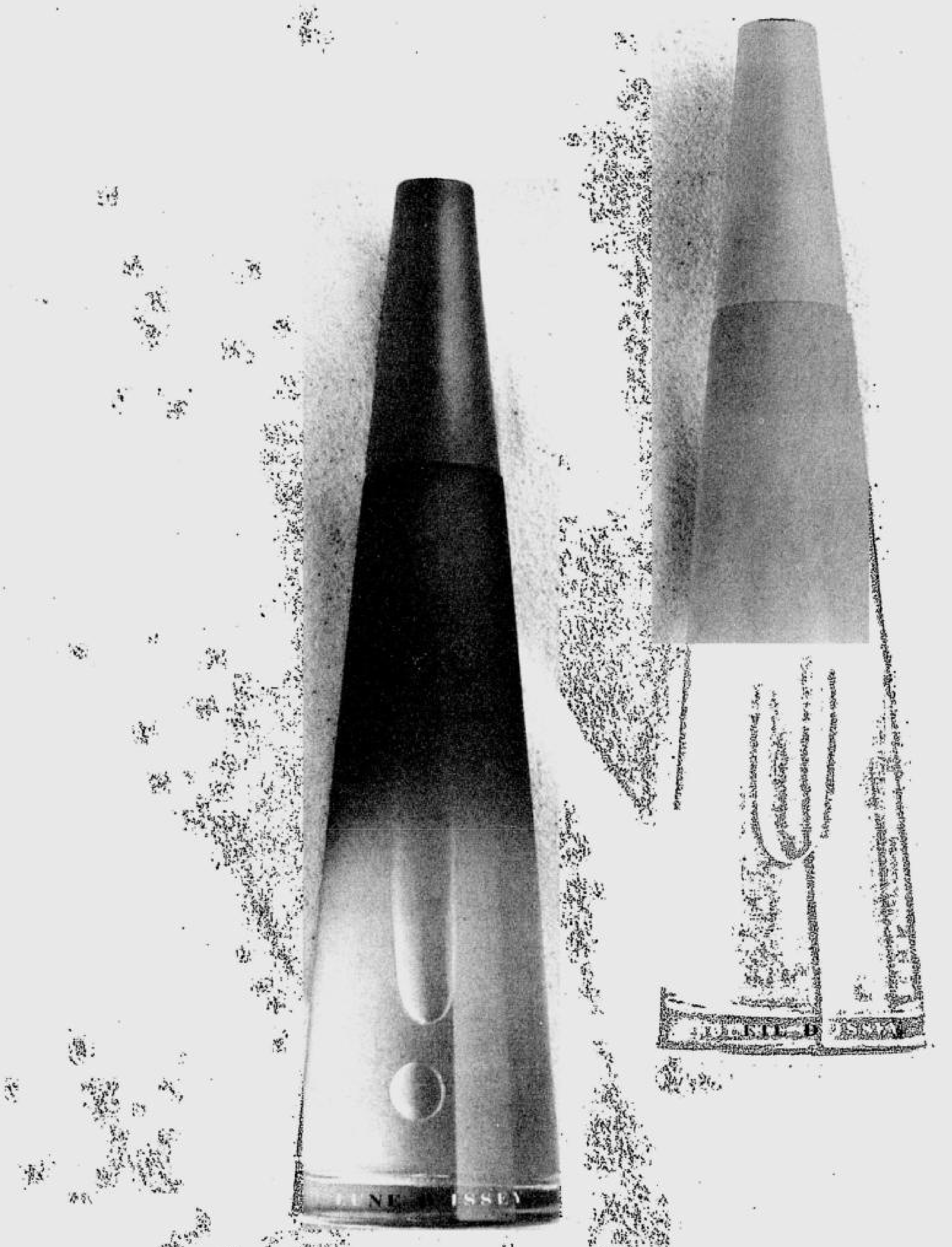
The Chanel No. 5 Essential Bath Oil is dedicated to women who value physical as well as spiritual well-being. This alcohol-free bath oil formula has *ylang-ylang* essential oil that is soothing and relaxing. Sweet almond oil provides a softening effect, while *polyol* and avocado oil soften and give comfort to the skin. Body moisturizing is made possible by Pro-Vitamin B5 that is also contained in the formula.

The Sheer Moisture Mist combines the intensity of the fragrance with the magical sensation of a soft, fluid emulsion. The formula is sprayed all over the body to create moisturizing veil that is much lighter than normal body milk. This application allows lipids of plant origin to trap moisture in the upper layers of the skin.

The Hair Mist adds the No. 5 fragrance to the hair for the ultimate seduction tool. Hair retains fragrance and releases it in an intoxicating trail. The gentle Hair Mist gives out the No. 5 scent discreetly as an invisible adornment.

The No. 5 Bath and Body Range and other products by Chanel are available at Rustan's.

ISSEY MIYAKE
PARIS



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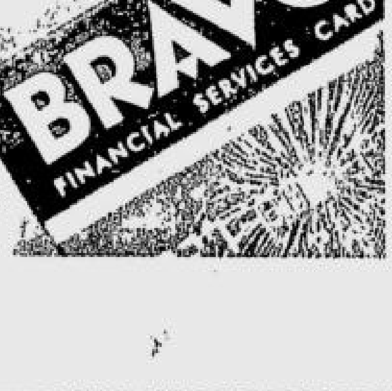


INSULAR LIFE INAUGURATION

The Insular Life Corporate Centre, the newest headquarters of the country's first Filipino life insurance company located at the Filinvest Corporate City Alabang, was recently inaugurated with the Honorable Vice President Teofisto T. Guingona Jr. leading the ceremonial rites (right). Photo shows Vicente Ayllon, board chair and president of Insular Life and wife Annie Ayllon; Johnny Araneta, Insular Life board of trustees (partly hidden). Other guests include representatives from government, business sector, the insurance industry and the company's clients.

Life INSURANCE

AGGIE PINILI, Account Manager SPROJECTS@INQUIRER.COM.PH **ARIES B. ESPINOSA**, Assistant Editor

A big push from a new medium

AS THE insurance industry goes all-out in tri-media to market its products to the most number of Filipinos, it may unexpectedly get a big push from cyberspace—what is considered the fourth realm of media. And sometime in the near future, as more Filipinos hook up and even younger generations get their information from surfing the Net, the insurance industry may look at the World Wide Web as one of the catalysts in pushing the Insurance Commission's "20/20" goal beyond expectations.

Here comes the Internet to the rescue.

The Internet is touted as a major medium to efficiently facilitate information, products, and services to an even greater number of people. The local insurance industry, which has witnessed the entry of multinational-based insurance firms in recent years, certainly has taken note of this promising medium, as not a few of them have already put up their own web sites for present and potential policyholders to more conveniently facilitate services and transactions.

INSURANCE DEVELOPMENT					
Per capita expenditure	330.66	377.61	428.17	434.04	460.1
Life	182.69	210.61	242.38	264.72	299.9
Non-Life	147.73	167	185.79	169.32	160.2
Life sum insured as % of GDP	34.10%	30.47%	32.61%	33.92%	33.86%
GNP	33.19%	29.26%	31.30%	31.32%	32.16%
Premiums (Life & Non-Life) as % of GDP	1.19%	1.22%	1.26%	1.19%	1.15%
GNP	1.16%	1.17%	1.21%	1.13%	1.09%
Gross value added on insurance	15,619	18,460	21,190	24,201	27,279
ESTIMATED LIFE INSURANCE COVERAGE	15.04%	15.56%	16.92%	15.92%	19.73%

The impact of the Internet as an effective marketing tool for insurance companies have been emphasized in an Internet insurance study by Booz·Allen & Hamilton, Inc., a leading management and technology firm. The study, however, also strongly suggests that insurance web sites must offer more than online marketing capabilities. "Companies that develop a clear strategy for their Internet services will lower costs, serve customers better and gain the edge over competitors," the study adds.

According to Booz·Allen officer Gil Irwin, who supervised the study of leading insurance companies conducted by the firm's Financial and Health Services Practice, the results demonstrate the Internet's revolutionary impact on both insurance products and industry price structure.

"The Internet could cut costs across the insurance value chain by more than 60 percent, with the most dramatic savings in distribution and customer service," he said. "These cost savings, combined with convenient and customized service, will encourage consumers to buy policies electronically. Companies that offer online policies will undercut traditionally priced products and threaten insurers' profitability."

"Insurance companies are inconsistent in their approach to the Internet. On the one hand, they recognize the Internet's implications for pricing, products and service," Irwin said. "At the same time, the industry is far from embracing the interactive potential of the Internet to serve customers in the same way that banks and brokerage firms are striving to do."

The ramifications of Internet development are so complex and the rate of Net growth so rapid insurance companies must get ahead of the curve. Specifically, Booz·Allen recommends that companies:

- Capitalize on a low-cost opportunity to pilot new products and services.
- Develop a business strategy that clearly articulates the role of the Internet, including how it will affect the company's distribution and delivery strategies.
- Update back-end systems and link to Web sites today, paving the way for advanced Internet capabilities in the near future.
- Approach a "fast follower" strategy with trepidation. The time required to reengineer back-office processes and establish linkages to legacy systems makes this a risky proposition.
- Take advantage of the security technology that is available and effective for Web-based commerce.
- Balance these initiatives with support of the agent force; consider new roles for the traditional insurance agent to complement online strategy.
- Explore partnering, even with potential competitors.

Key study findings include the following:

Nearly all participants said they do not expect the Internet to alter their business practices materially or immediately, nor affect the industry's cost structure.

Of the 120 insurance company Web sites analyzed, 50 percent have marketing capabilities, only 22 percent offer basic customer support and product information, 7 percent provide online policy quotes, and just 1 percent offer interactive customer service or online sales.

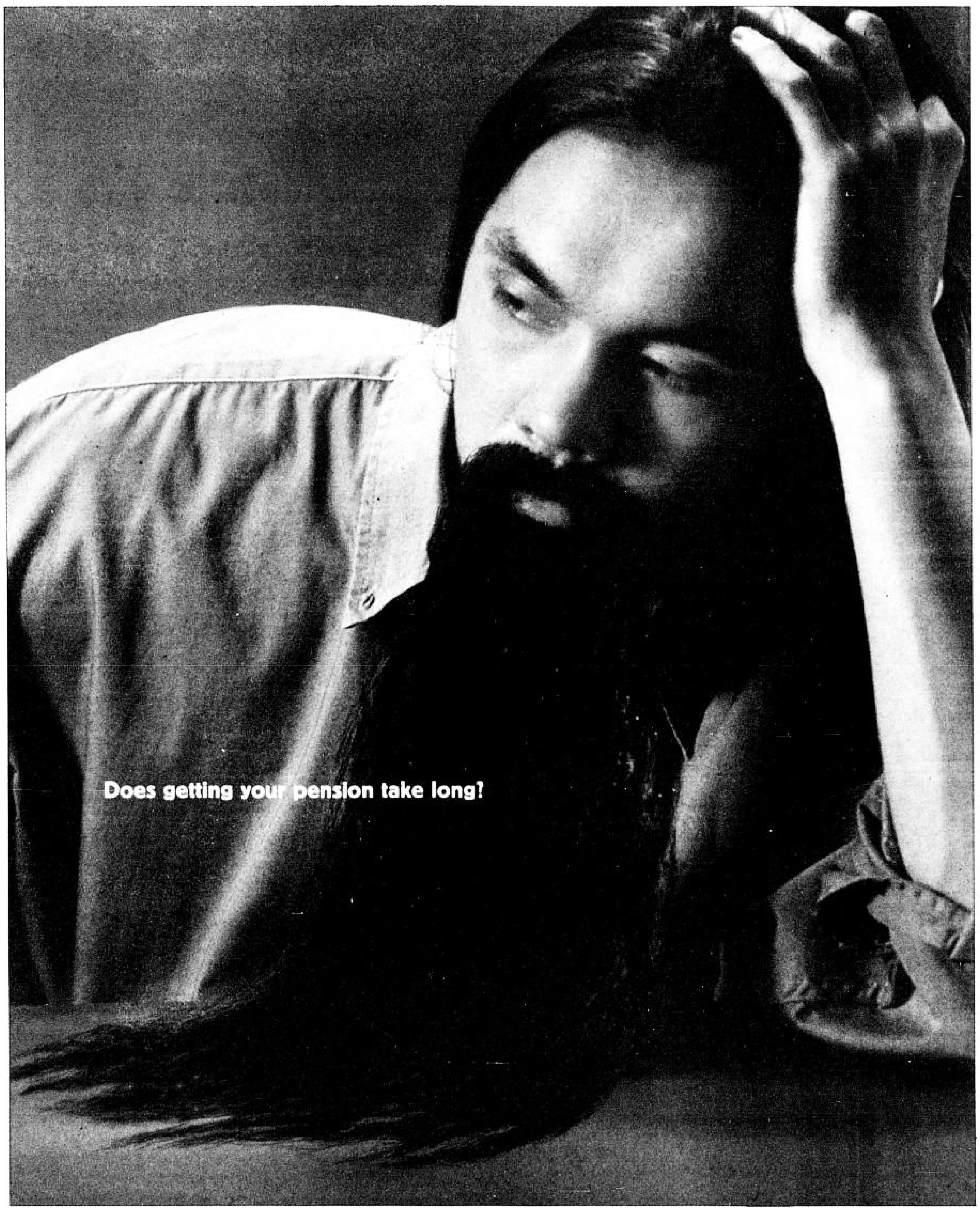
Overall, respondents ranked selling products directly to consumers as the "least important goal" for their sites.

Insurance agents are both challenged and threatened by the Internet. For example, 80 percent of participants said their agents appreciate the heightened visibility on the Web. At the same time, a substantial percentage of the companies reported that agents have expressed concern about their role's changing with the rise of electronic commerce.

Respondents viewed safeguarding the security of transactions as the "primary risk" to implementing advanced online capabilities.

Advanced Web-based applications could cut distribution costs by upwards of 60 percent, as well as potentially boosting sales and increasing customer satisfaction.

Booz·Allen & Hamilton's Financial and Health Services Practice, which conducted the study, is a leading global financial services advisor, with clients and experience in insurance, health care management, retail banking and brokerage, wholesale banking, and asset management.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Do your hands need therapy?

HANDS need a little therapy every day. Changes in temperature and exposure to harsh detergents and water mean they can become dehydrated, dry and prone to wrinkling. Crabtree & Evelyn introduces new hand creams that contain a blend of moisturizers and herbal extracts—shea butter, calendula, clover and yarrow—which leave your skin in optimum condition naturally without leaving a greasy residue. Each retails for P600 for 100 ml and is presented in a metal tube.

Poor cuticles—Massage Lavender Hand Therapy onto nails and cuticles. Pure Lavender oil helps to heal while yarrow and calendula calms and soothes tender skin. Suitable for every day wear.

Dry skin—The relaxing, fresh fragrance of La Source Hand Therapy is ideal before or after playing sports or on the beach. Shea butter intensively moisturizes to prevent wrinkling due to excessive water exposure. La Source Hand Therapy melts instantly into the skin without leaving a greasy residue. Suitable for every day wear.

Dehydrated skin—Sonoma Valley Hand Therapy and Summer Hill Hand Therapy are hardworking hand creams with pretty, floral fragrances. Sonoma Valley is a delicate blend of grape leaves, mimosa and wisteria while Summer Hill is a bouquet of wild flowers. Both are ideal for every day wear.

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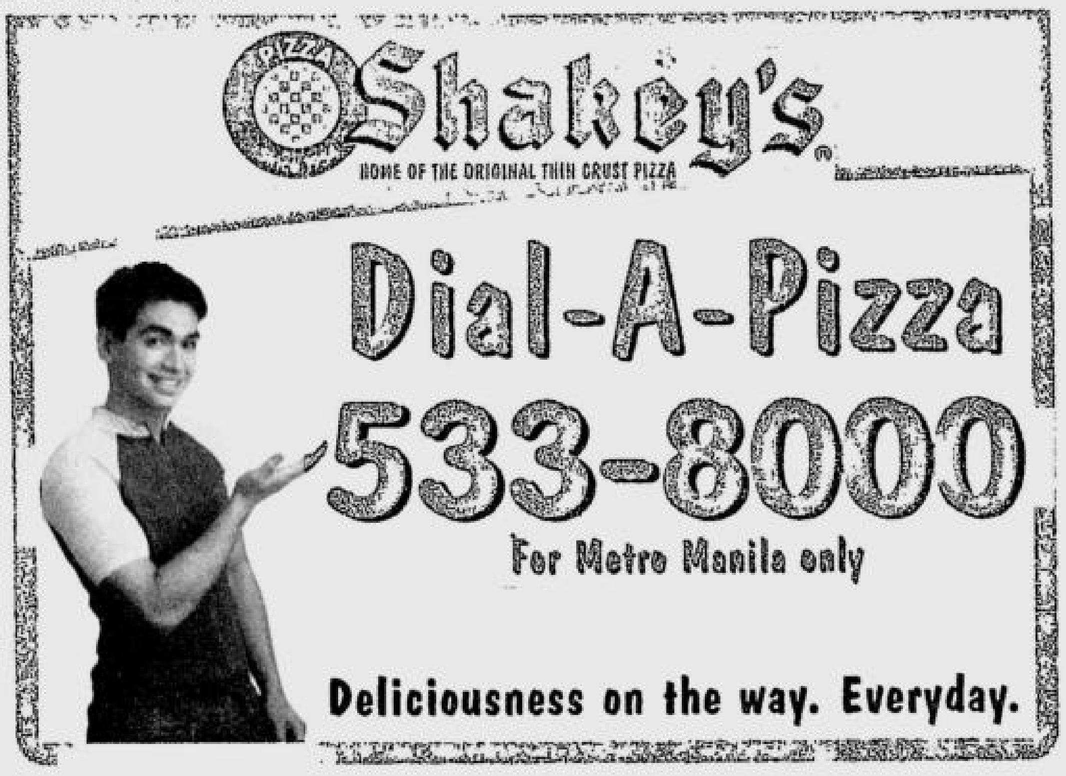
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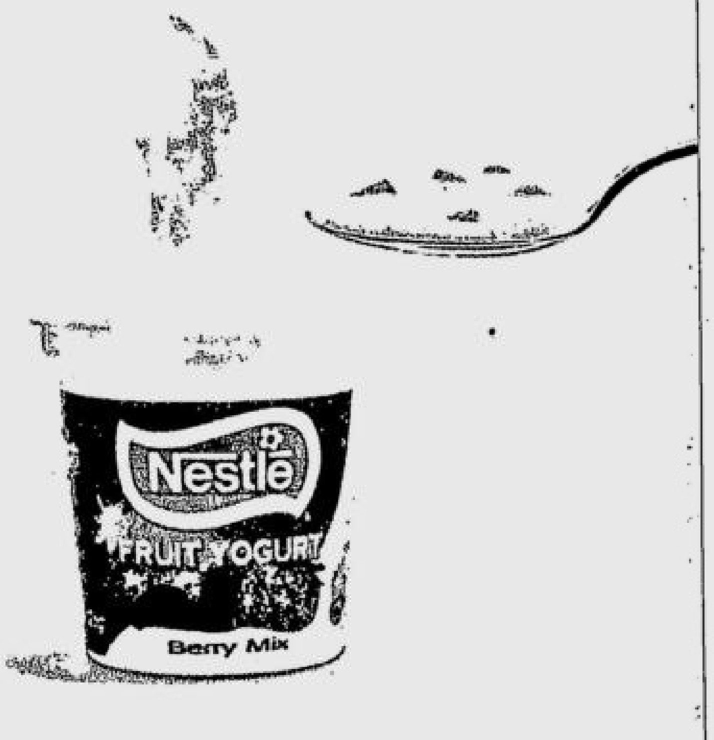

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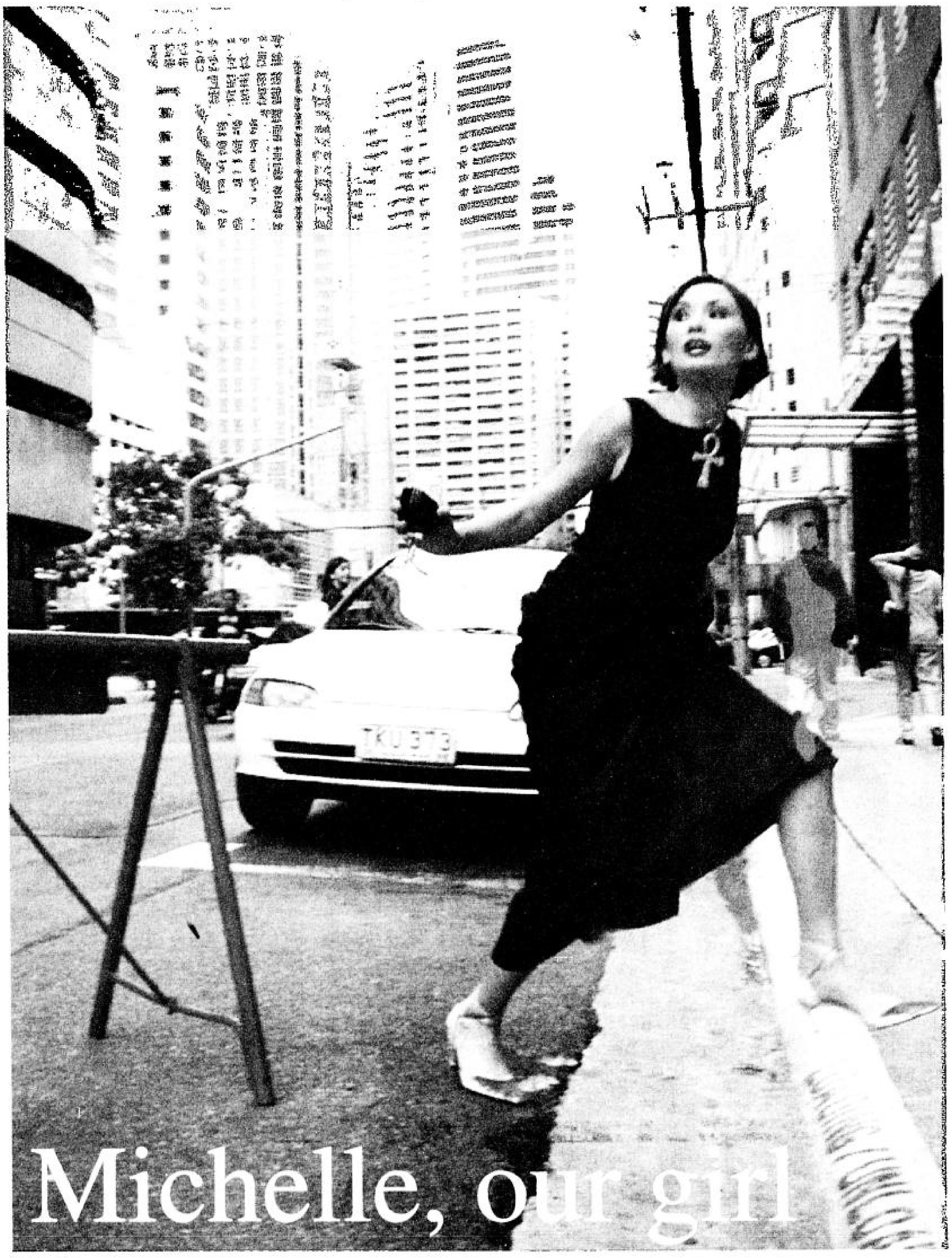
BACK up, boys, or I'll shoot! Just joking. We just wanted to show the detail of the evening dress



Michelle, our girl

JUMPING JACKFLASH. Black evening dress and gold Jill Stuart shoes.

FOR ART'S SAKE. Michelle wears a polyester batwing blouse over a brown slip dress and is shod in Anne Klein cork-soled mules.

WHY SPY? A spoof of the famous cartoon from Mad Magazine. Michelle wears Mix's bestseller, the trench coat with pink Jill Stuart shoes.

By Marge C. Enriquez

Photos by Chito Vecina

PICTORIAL DIRECTION BY TONTON SANTOS

THE LAST-MINUTE change of model for Mix Boutique's pictorial turned out to be fortuitous. Aside from being one of the Ivory girls and a spokesperson for Globe and Carefree, the new model has a show-biz pedigree. And since we had met a lot of self-conscious, albeit overcautious models, before Michelle Mendoza Quizon disarmed us with her candor.

The minute she walked in, everybody could see that she had the fair skin and chiseled features of a Quizon. Michelle is the granddaughter of Dolphy. Although she got her slim, high-ridged nose from her father Rollie Quizon, she is often mistaken as a sister of Eric and Jeffrey Quizon who both come from another branch.

The 24-year-old commercial model and Northwest Airline flight attendant is the eldest in her family that includes two half-brothers. Estranged from her father when she was a child, she experienced the challenges of being single-handedly raised by Raquel Mendoza.

But Michelle's childhood was never found wanting. Dolphy doted on all his grandchildren. He showered them with gifts and cash. He would take his eldest granddaughter to the home of Eric and Jeffrey when he was still living with Alice Smith. Michelle became close to the brood. Today, she and Jeffrey, her uncle who's only three years her senior, go out often.

Shielded

When she tagged along to the tapings of Dolphy's show, network executives would ask if she could be a talent. But her grandfather shielded the Quizon women from this world of illusion. He insisted that Michelle pursue her career in modeling and travel.

Michelle has always been an achiever. As a child, she took home medals and gave them to Dolphy. While studying commerce, major in marketing, at the College of the Holy Spirit, she was active in extra-curricular activities.

Michelle's foray into modeling was a fluke. When she went to Mod magazine for a school assignment, the management asked her if she could appear on the cover. Then one day while strolling in the mall, model Jack de Mesa approached her and gave her his card. He was starting a modeling agency, Ideal People, and he saw her potential. Now she's an exclusive talent for Elan.

Like any talent, she had to audition to get a job. She recalled that during the call for Ivory soap, she was intimidated by the roomful of beautiful hopefuls. The ad agency took her VTR and then made her undergo an acting workshop.

Granddaddy's girl

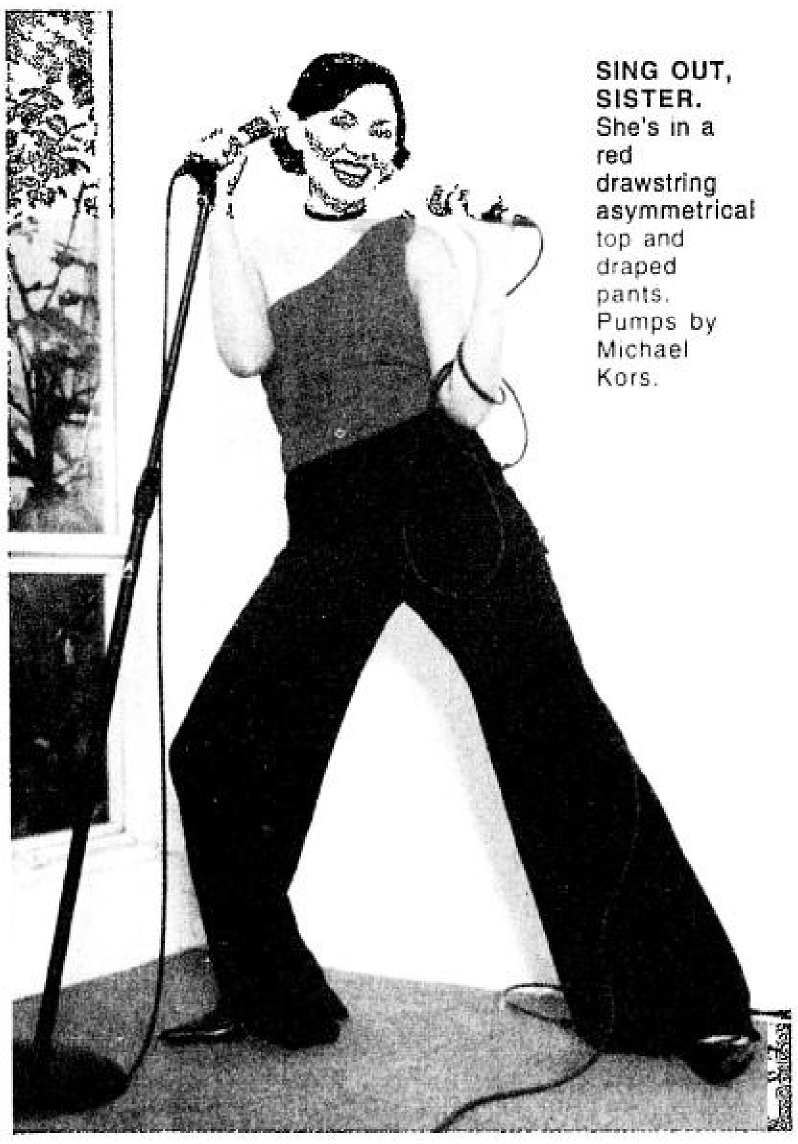
Having a legendary grandfather has opened doors for her. But to Michelle, it wasn't his fame that made her proud of him. "He's a good man. He's very generous to people. They like him so they like me, too."

Dolphy has inspired her in many ways. He strove hard to reach the status that he enjoys now and yet has remained humble despite his great achievements. When she would have problems, she would consult him and he would boost her confidence.

Michelle has always wanted everyone to be proud of her. "I grew up without a father. I promised my mom that I would give her the life she deserves," she said. She has kept that aim. Michelle lives on her own and travels around the region for half of the month. She shares her earnings with her family.

With the big-budget ads that she had bagged, Dolphy would tease her that she came out more often in television than he did. Despite the early estrangement, Rollie, an executive of the family-owned RVQ Productions, brags to his friends about his eldest child's achievements.

Michelle has a resilient personality. "I never let anything put me down. I take everything in a positive way," she said. Spoken like a true Scorpio. Give her a challenge and her eyes take on a new sparkle.



SING OUT, SISTER. She's in a red drawstring asymmetrical top and draped pants. Pumps by Michael Kors.

MAKEUP BY TOTO
FOR PATRICK ROSAS
HAIR BY JAIME RUBEN

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LCEYE3L	LCEYES1L	LCEYES2L	LCEYES3L
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SWIFT
Sweet 'n Juicy Hotdog
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1 kg.
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CAMPO CARNE
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1 kg.
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500 g / 2's
PRICE P170.00
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PUREFOODS
Cordon Bleu
225 g.
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CHUAN TECK
Siopao
- Asado
- Bola-bola
4's
PRICE P40.00
Reg. Price 42.50

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Sardines
- In Tomato Sauce
- Red In Tomato Sauce
- Hot In Tomato Sauce
155 g
PRICE P7.60
Reg. Price 7.75

DAK
Pork Luncheon Meat
340 g
PRICE P42.50
Reg. Price 49.50

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Chinese Luncheon Meat
375 g
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Econo Can
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390 g
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- Chicken, 420 g
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- Chicken Noodle Soup 410 g
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KNORR
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- Mushroom, 70 g.
- Chicken, 70 g.
- Asparagus, 70 g.
- Corn, 80 g
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PET Bottle
1 Liter
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25 g / 20s
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LIFESTYLE Home

For feedback, text us at (0919) 661-2337 or e-mail us at lifestyle@inquirer.com.ph

Zen reinterpreted and rarefied

(Story on page F2)

Awash in symbolism and symmetry, the Suarezes' home has been inspired by the peaceful in the Japanese

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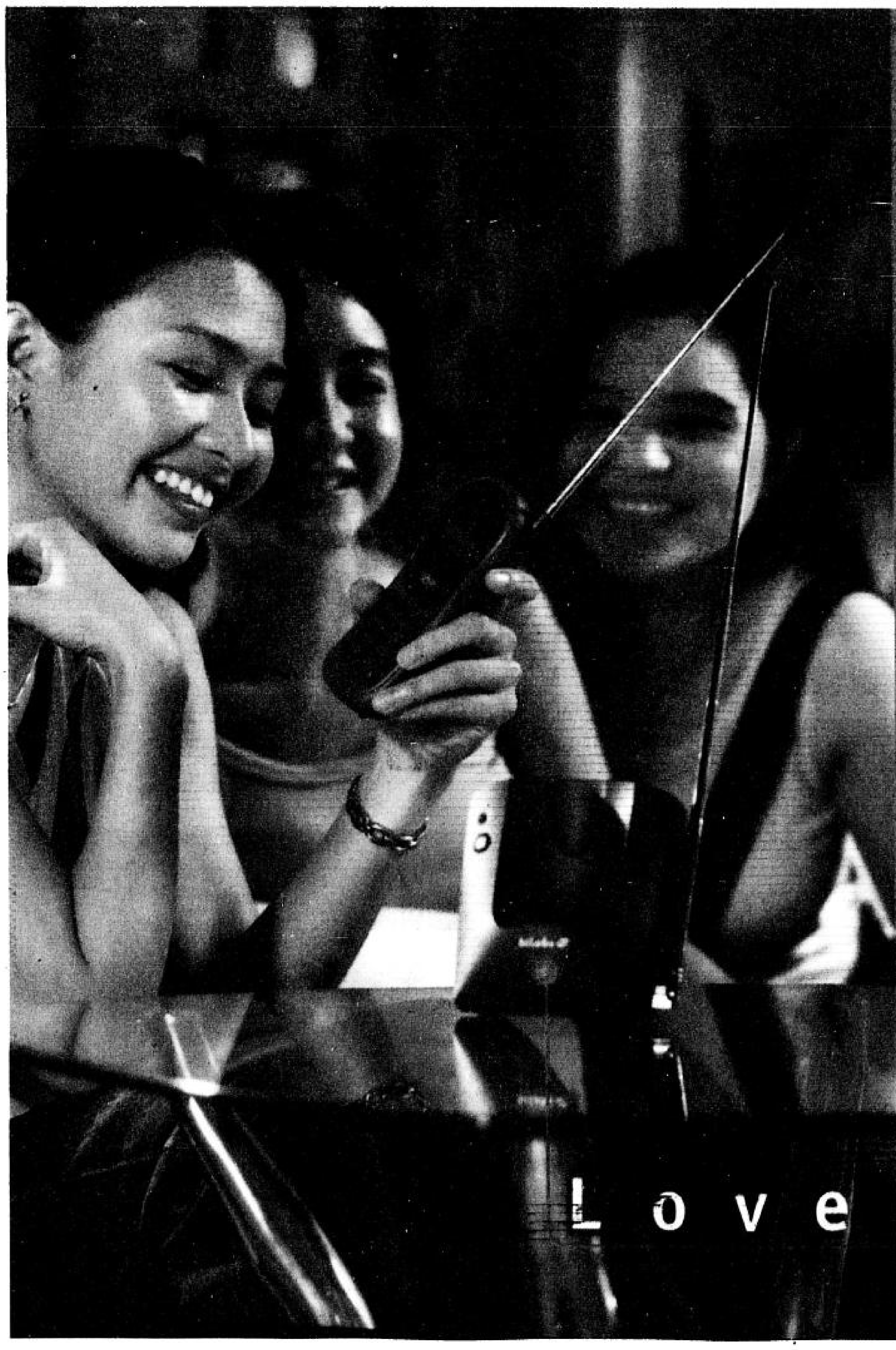

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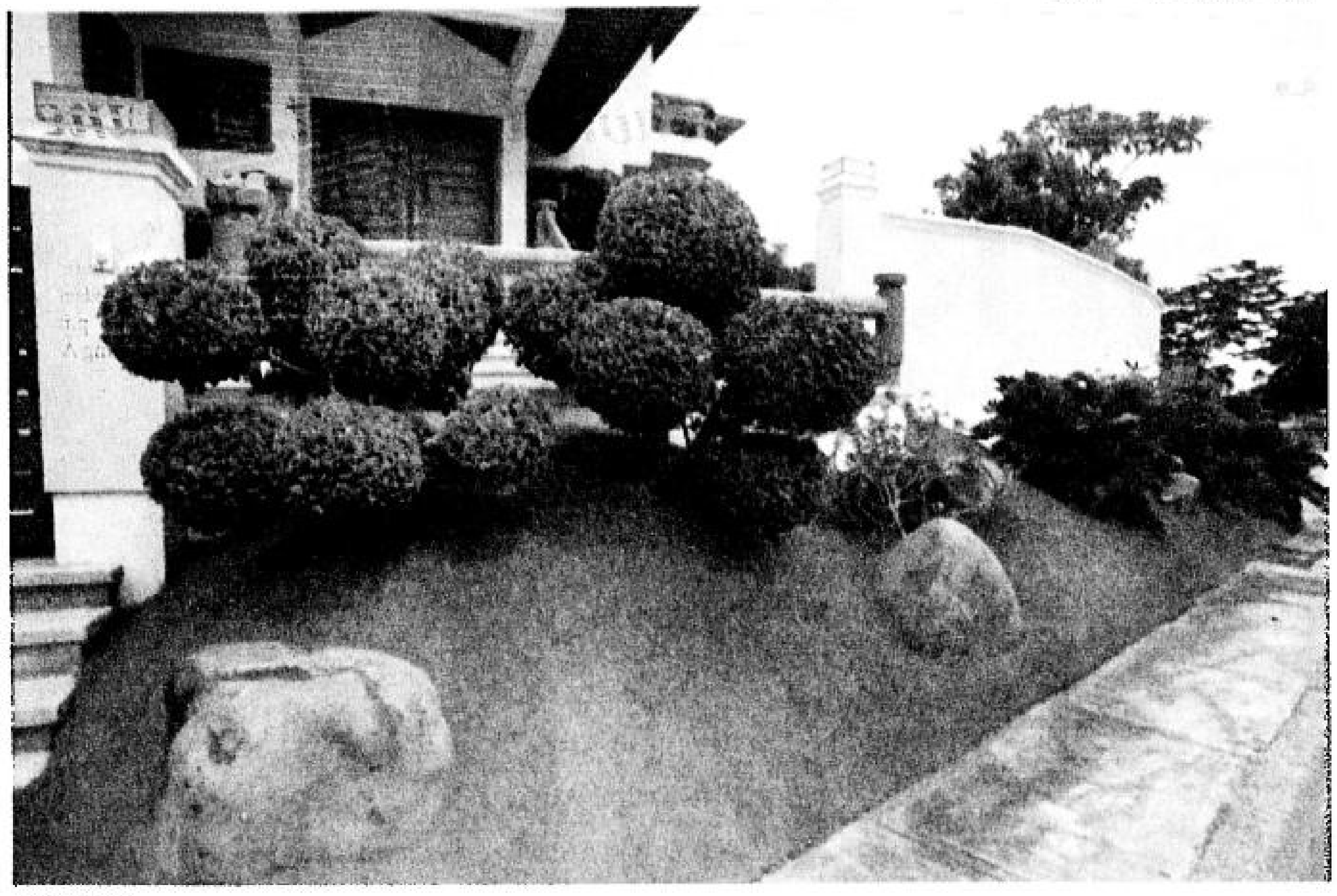


GOING IN CIRCLES. Round topiaries, Bermuda grass and huge irregular rocks extend to the garden beyond the perimeter wall.

Zen reinterpreted and rarefied

THE LIVING room's Oriental corner with a long wooden ottoman, throw pillows and several oriental accent pieces

THE FAMILY'S room with of one of Cor's favorite paintings by Moscoso hanging on the wall. Her collection of antique blue and white dishes are in the china cabinet.

By Alex Y. Vergara
Photos by Bobot Meru

MANY movie buffs were predictably hooked on "Pearl Harbor's" cutting-edge digital effects and classic love story. But there was something about the latest Hollywood blockbuster that left Socorro "Cor" T. Suarez and hundreds of like-minded souls a tad disturbed: how could such a gentle people steeped in orderliness and Zen teachings be capable of such violence?

The paradox hit home (pardon the pun) since the Suarez residence in Alabang not only follows clean Japanese lines—from its manicured gardens and stone arrangements to the *shoji*-inspired windows—but is also awash in symbolism and juxtaposition that only a seasoned psychologist fascinated with Japanese architecture and Zen philosophy could think of.

When Cor and architect Odette Bongato set out to build the Suarezes' Japanese-inspired home more than three years ago, the mistress of the house wanted something beyond a showcase and refuge from the elements. What she wanted was a sanctuary from the demands of their exacting careers, something to keep them sane and grounded.

"I'm a frustrated interior designer," says Cor, a psychology graduate and Watson Wyatt's director for organization effectiveness consultancy. "I've always loved to design homes. I'm happy to lend my services to whoever wants to be a victim of my flair."

Cor, a native of Negros Occidental, also wanted to give only son Jeric, now 16, a semblance of country living. Cocks crow and birds still chirp in this urban village, so much like in Cor's hometown almost two generations ago. "I wanted a place that evokes serenity and tranquility," she says. "A place where we can recharge and free our minds from the hustle and bustle of daily life."

Personal journey

First things first. According to "Zen Style: Balance and Simplicity for your Home," Cor's glossy book, "Zen is an approach to life, a way of being, rather than a philosophy or set doctrine. It's more a personal journey of discovery, which aims to free the mind so that a greater level of awareness—both of ourselves and the world around us—can be achieved."

Along the way, Cor picked up a number of Japanese terms that she has learned to apply and combine in her three-story home (four, if you include the garage basement): *mitate*—finding new uses for old things; *satori*—flash of enlightenment; and *mu*—nothingness.

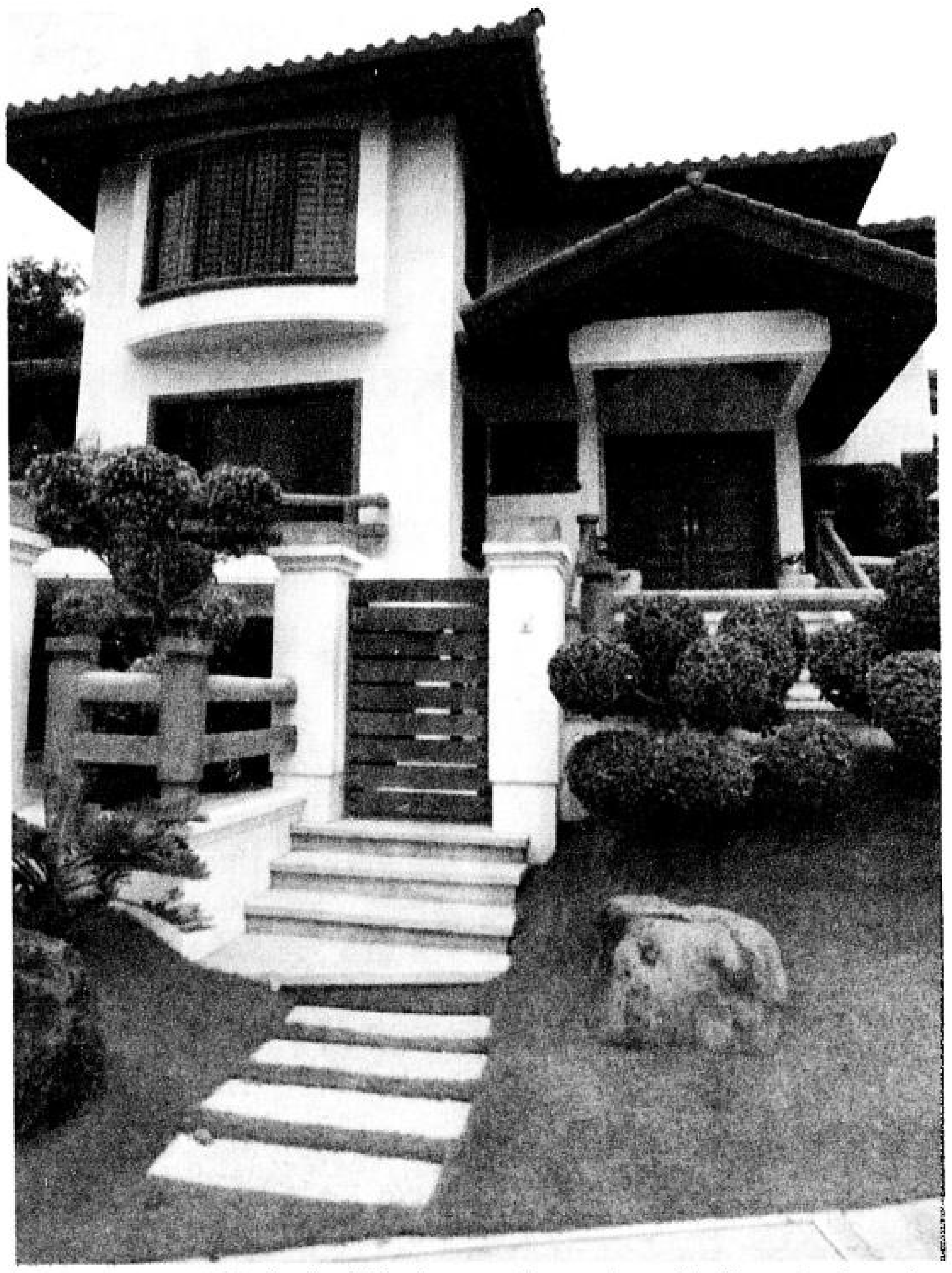
"I can't read Japanese characters," she says with a chuckle, while showing us several coffee-table books on Japanese gardens and interior design written in English by foreign authors. Nor has she traveled or worked before in Japan. "The farthest I've been to [Japan] is the airport."

It must be the psychologist in Cor since almost every aesthetic element in the garden, which is carpeted with Bermuda grass and spruced up with round ficus trees, symbolizes something profound. There's symmetry in contrasting elements as depicted in several hollow stone containers, each with a pair of round glass objects.

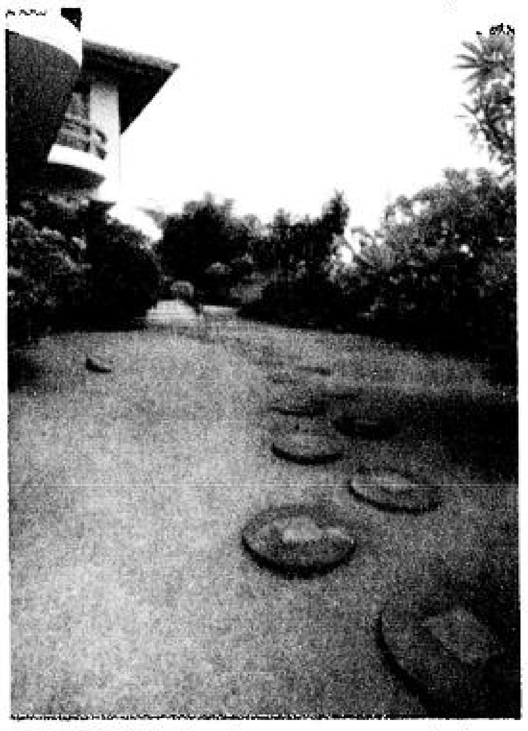
Nothing fancy, really. If anything, the arrangement is a classic example of *mitate*. The craggy containers were actually hog feeders, while the smooth, marine-blue glass objects used to function as net floaters. To Cor, however, something as fragile as the floater combined with something as sturdy as the feeder connotes how fleeting life is vis-a-vis eternity. The same principle extends to plants. While Cor and her trusted gardener take pains to shape the fichus trees round, she lets the bushy Chinese holly grow wild.

"The Japanese love round things," she ob-

ZEN/p.F5

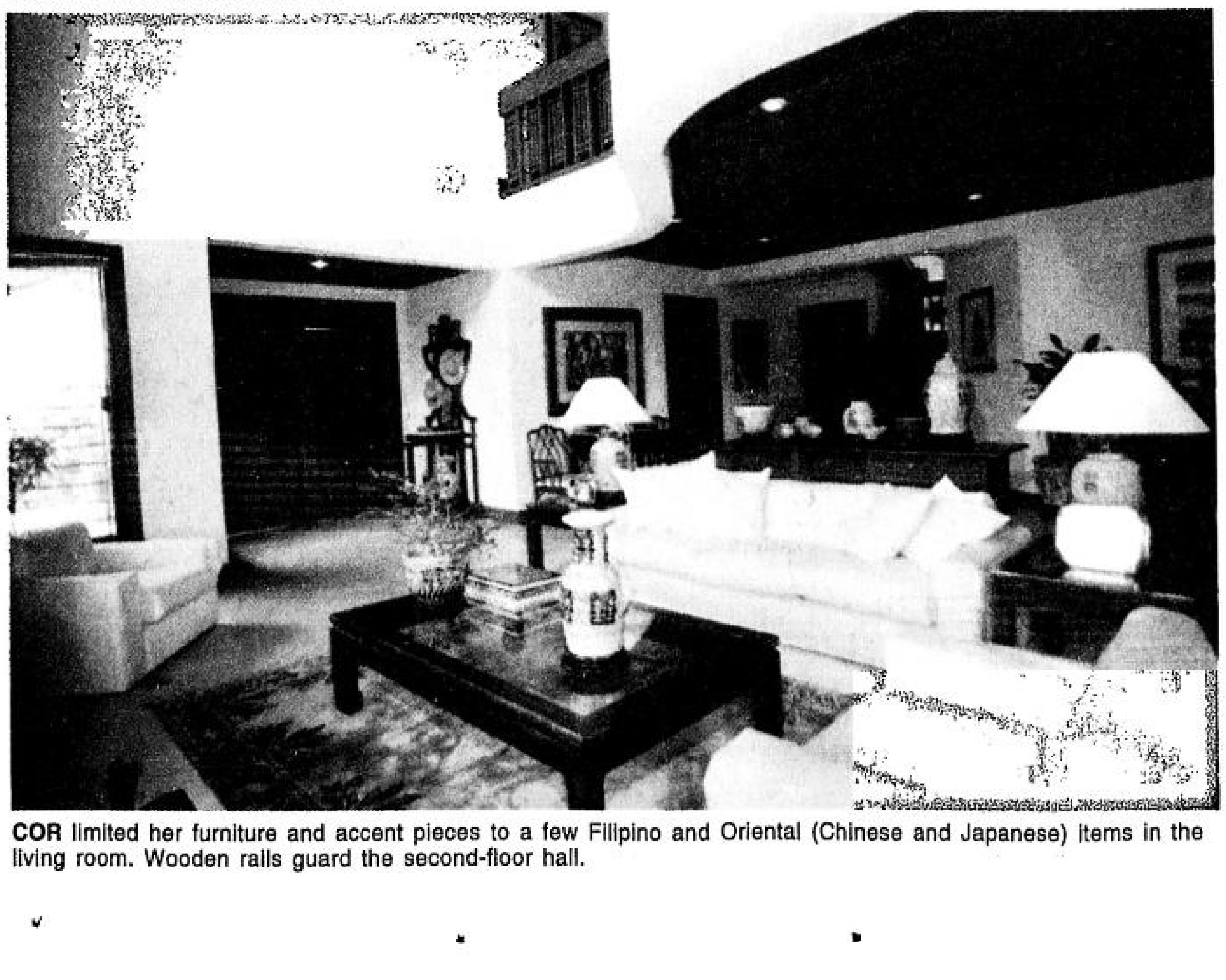


TURNING JAPANESE. Unmistakable Japanese lines make up this three-story home in Alabang, with white façade, wooden railings and extended eaves.

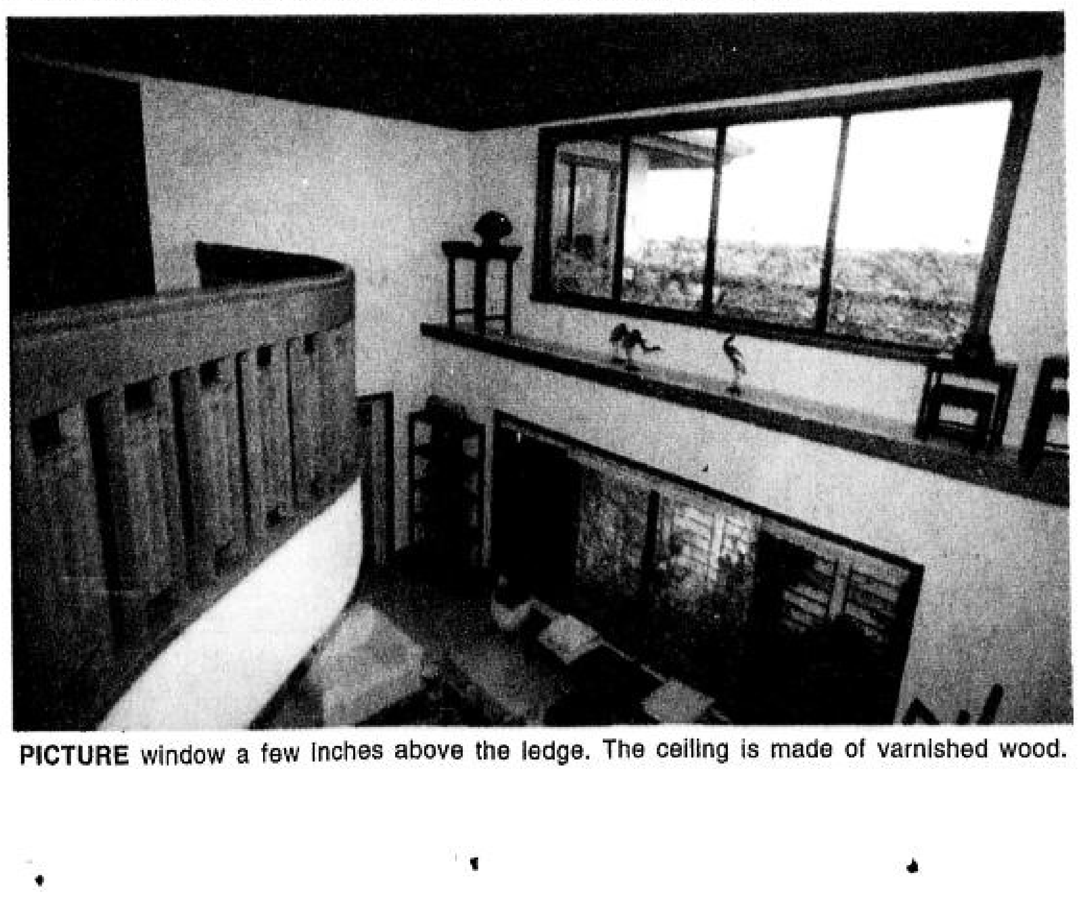


FOLLOWING the Japanese concept of *mitate*, Cor Suarez turned these stone grinders into a series of stepping stones.

OUTSIDE IN. Big picture windows resemble *shoji* windows of Japan.



COR limited her furniture and accent pieces to a few Filipino and Oriental (Chinese and Japanese) items in the living room. Wooden rails guard the second-floor hall.



PICTURE window a few inches above the ledge. The ceiling is made of varnished wood.

Rose Borromeo to give workshops on Spanish dance

ROSE Borromeo, former star student and professional partner of the late Ruben Nieto, Spanish dance exponent of the Philippines who has been residing in Singapore for the last 20 years, is coming home to give workshops to Spanish dance aficionados in different levels of proficiency.

Rose has been teaching flamenco in her studio in Singapore and is visited annually by the Spanish Dance Institute founder to access her students. The results of her training have received excellent feedback from the board of the Institute and she has been assigned to introduce the syllabi to the Philippines.

Since the SDI syllabus is a thorough dance education of Spanish dance, it has opened Rose's eyes on how clearly our Filipino folkdance has been influenced by the folkloric and Escuela Bolera styles in Spanish dance.

The workshops will be based on the Spanish Dance Institute Syllabi founded by Deanna Blacher in 1984 with the assistance of Angel Quintrla, honorary consul of Spain in Perth, Western Australia to regulate the teaching of Spanish dance and to guarantee uniform quality of tuition by all member schools. It is the prime Spanish dance accreditation body and it is expanding throughout the world with the system being taught in Perth, Melbourne, Milano, Brescia, Tel Aviv, Singapore and to be introduced in the United States and Manila.

A structured syllabus has been compiled by Blacher as a result of many years of international experience as a dancer, teacher, choreographer and educator, aiming at creating a smooth, logical and complete system that ensures all styles of Spanish dance, including flamenco and all aspects of Spanish dance technique, history and theory. This comprehensive approach results in a more complete, competent and confident dancer and teacher.

The institute holds formal examinations annually for those who are interested in receiving formal certification. These are conducted by qualified examiners appointed by the institute. The patron of the institute is Juanjo Linares of Madrid.

This unique dance training is excellent for classical ballet, Filipino folk and ballroom dancers to learn the movements that they use in Spanish ballets like "Don Quixote," folk dances like "Maria Clara" and ballroom dances like the *pasodoble*.

Intensive workshops will be held from July 2-8 at the Performing Arts Studios, 843 S. Laurel St., Mandaluyong City. Call 724-3476 or 727-5651. Visit the Spanish Dance Institute and Sengra Deanna Blacher at www.danzadiva.com.

Habitat project ongoing in Talisay City

HABITAT for Humanity Philippines' Negros Occidental affiliate has prepared its site in Talisay City for the arrival of more than 350 Dutch volunteers, plus a daily influx of 300 local volunteers and home-partner families as several groups have started to lend helping hands for the Stiho Work Project 2001 until June 30.

High school students of the Trinity Christian School, the Ayala Young Leaders Club, the Youth for Christ and the home-partners of Pamana Habitat, where homes were completed during the Philippine Jimmy Carter Work Project in 1999, and other community members have assisted in the pre-blitz build activities.

Visit the Negros Occidental Habitat for Humanity office at Room 205, Plaza Mart building, Bacolod City, or call (034)433-7596/7599, or e-mail habitat@mozcom.com.

GOINGS-ON

LAUNCH. Philtranco, the pioneering bus company in the Philippines, is set to launch its Biyaheng Pinoy Privilege Plus card on July 1, to reward its steady stream of loyal passengers with a menu of benefits and privileges otherwise not offered by other transport companies.

CONCERT. Santuario de San Antonio will hold its silver jubilee concert on July 2, 7:30 p.m. at the Parish Church in Forbes Park, Makati. Call 843-8830 to -32 or 832-1125.

SEMINAR. ProActive Center for Training will hold basic foodservers training on July 2-6, 1-5 p.m. at Encore! Encore! 2/L Building A, SM Megamall, Mandaluyong City. Call 823-4947.

EXHIBIT. Expovision Trade Services Inc. (Expotrade) will present Shop Asia 2001 on July 5-8 at the World Trade Center. Call 895-2392 or 890-7531.

ANNIVERSARY. On July 11, seven priests from various parishes of Palawan will celebrate the 25th anniversary of their sacerdotal ordination at the San Jose Parish Church in San Jose, Puerto Princesa City, Palawan.

BOOK FESTIVAL. The Philippine Board on Books for Young People (PBBY) and Shangri-La Plaza Mall, with Nido, will present the 3rd PBBY Children's Book Festival on July 14-22 at the Shangri-La Plaza Mall. Call 372-3548.

FORUM. The Adoptive Families Foundation (AFF) and De La Salle University-College of St. Benilde Guidance and Counseling Center, will hold a forum on "Building Self-esteem in Adoptive Parents and Children," on July 14, at the 3/F, Room 302, Mutien Marie Building, De La Salle University-College of St. Benilde, Taft Avenue, Manila. Call 454-7670 or 927-6448.

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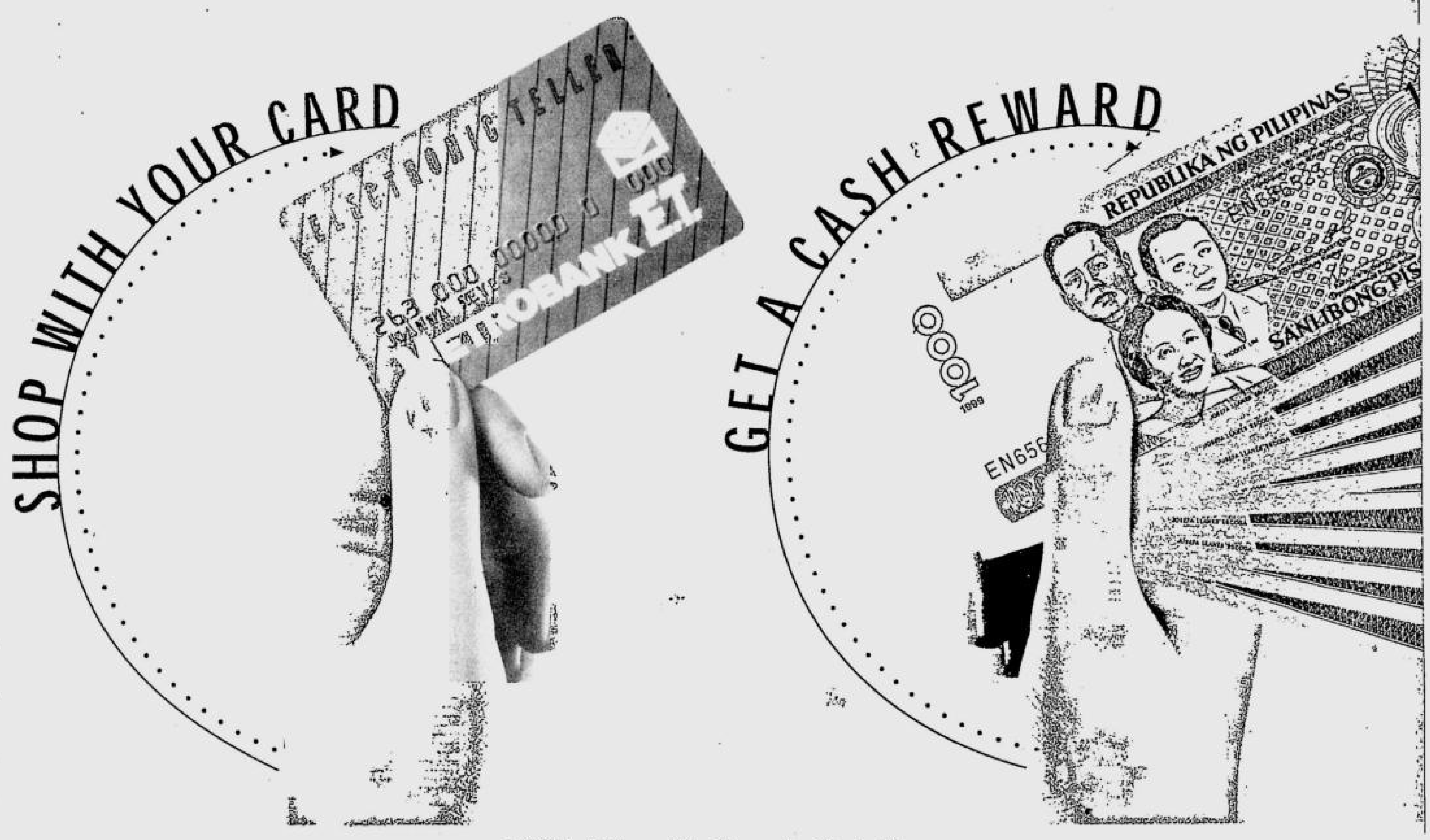

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a. MONTHLY DRAW	PAYMENT PERIOD	PRIZES	NO. OF WINNERS DEPOSITOR	CASHIER
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May 25, 2001	April 15 - May 14, 2001	₱2,000	30	30
June 22, 2001	May 15 - June 14, 2001	₱2,000	30	30
July 20, 2001	June 15 - July 14, 2001	₱2,000	30	30
August 24, 2001	July 15 - August 15,2001	₱2,000	30	30
b. GRAND DRAW				
August 24, 2001	March 15 - August 15, 2001	₱10,000	15	15

c. VENUE: Metrobank Head Office, Metrobank Plaza, Sen. Gil Puyat Ave., Makati City
Time: 3:00 pm

4. Thirty (30) winning numbers will be drawn in the monthly raffle and fifteen (15) will be drawn in the Grand Draw.
5. Each winning number will have a corresponding winning cashier who will win the same prize as the depositor's.
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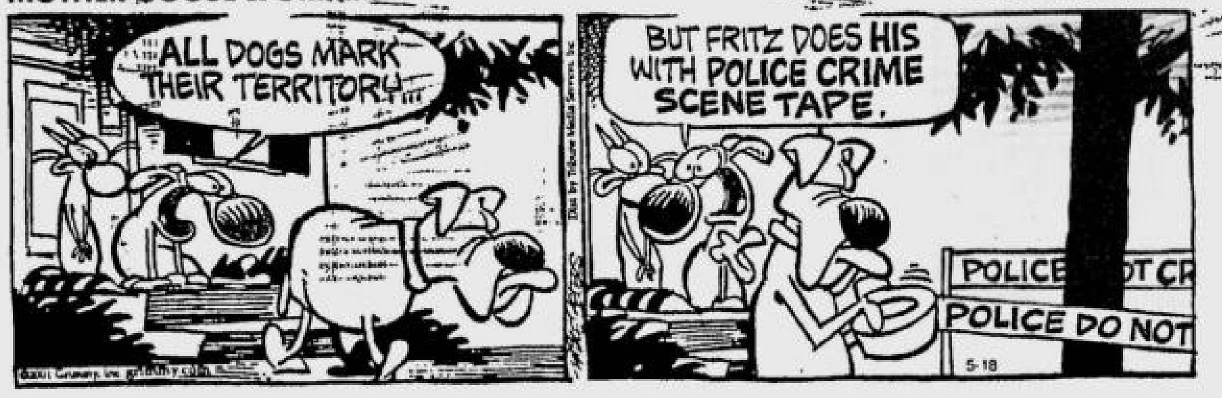
MOTHER GOOSE & GRIMM

BY MIKE PETERS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BUT FRITZ DOES HIS WITH POLICE CRIME SCENE TAPE.
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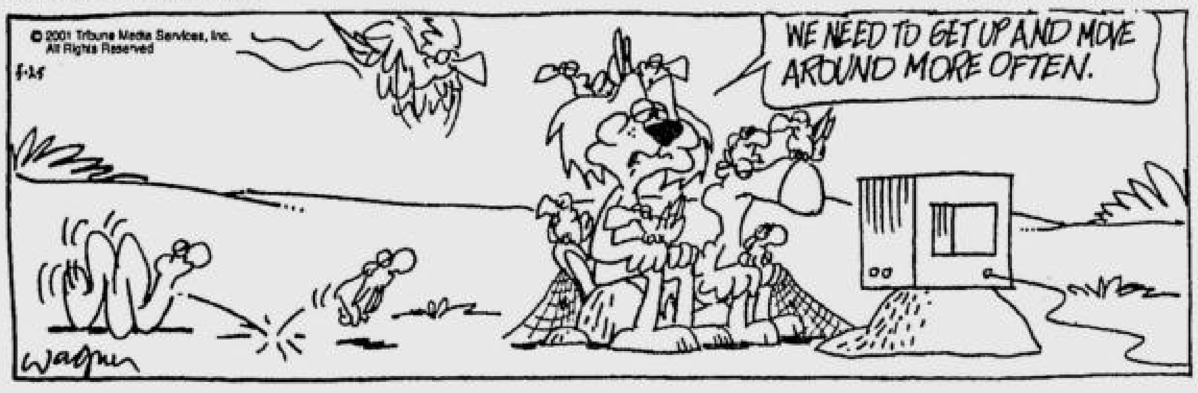
POLICE DO NOT
5-18

ANIMAL CRACKER

BY FRED WAGNER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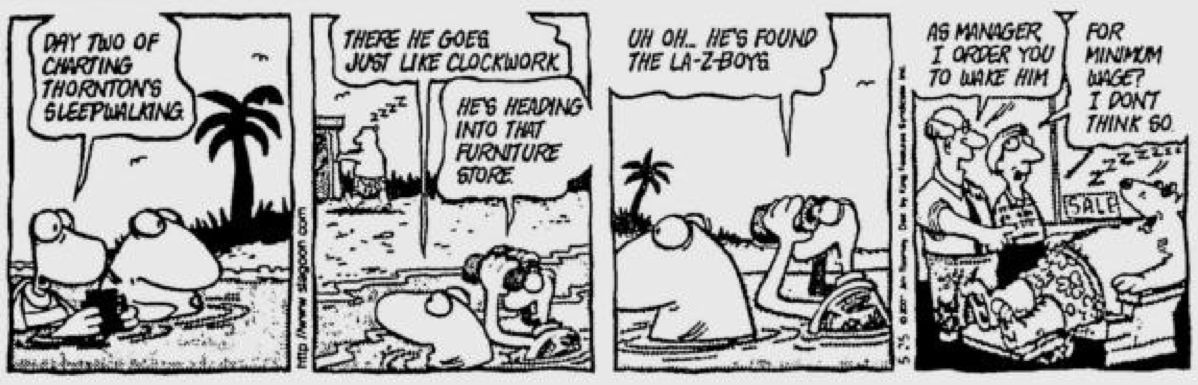
WE NEED TO GET UP AND MOVE AROUND MORE OFTEN.
wagner

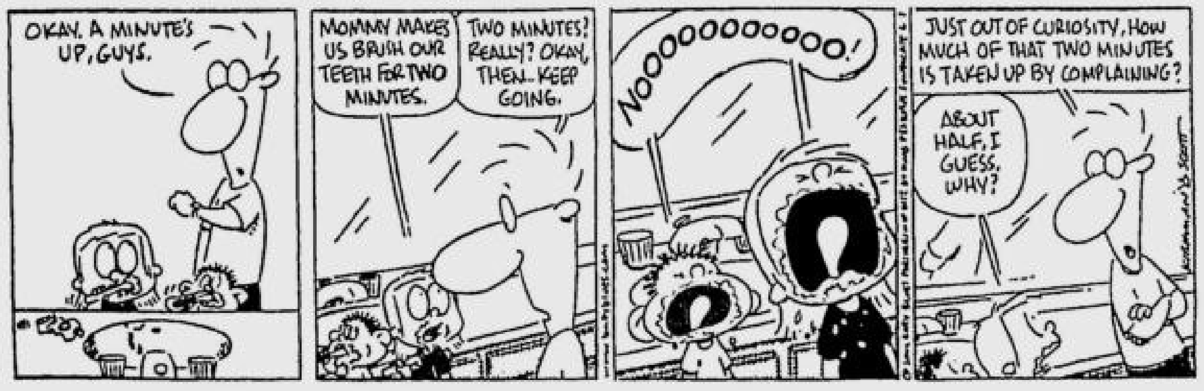
SHERMAN'S LAGOON

BY JIM TOOMEY


DAY TWO OF CHARTING THORNTON'S SLEEPWALKING.
THERE HE GOES. JUST LIKE CLOCKWORK.
HE'S HEADING INTO THAT FURNITURE STORE.
UH OH... HE'S FOUND THE LA-Z-BOYS.
AS MANAGER, I ORDER YOU TO WAKE HIM.
FOR MINIMUM WAGE? I DON'T THINK SO.
SALE
http://www.slagoon.com

BABY BLUES

BY JERRY SCOTT


OKAY, A MINUTE'S UP, GUYS.
MOMMY MAKES US BRUSH OUR TEETH FOR TWO MINUTES.
TWO MINUTES! REALLY? OKAY, THEN... KEEP GOING.
NOOOOOOOOOOO!
JUST OUT OF CURIOSITY, HOW MUCH OF THAT TWO MINUTES IS TAKEN UP BY COMPLAINING?
ABOUT HALF, I GUESS. WHY?

HOROSCOPE

BY EUGENIA LAST

CELEBRITIES BORN ON THIS DAY: Slim Pickens, Ruth Warrick, Maria Conchita Alonso, Amanda Donohoe, Fred Grandy, Gary Busey

Happy Birthday: Slow down and focus on those things that are really important to you. You must be precise in your work and reluctant to follow other people's desires. Be true to yourself and your ideas. Don't let anyone stand in your way or lead you astray. This is your year to make positive moves and gain satisfaction. Your numbers 4, 9, 13, 19, 28, 30

ARIES (March 21-April 19): Changes in your home environment are likely to upset family members. Use discipline and determination to do the right thing for everyone involved.

TAURUS (April 20-May 20): Emotional blackmail will drive you crazy. Don't let co-workers cause friction for you. Don't reveal anything about your private life. Be careful while operating vehicles.

GEMINI (May 21-June 20): You need to spend time on your own needs. A challenge would help you feel complete. Your social skills will certainly attract romantic possibilities.

CANCER (June 21-July 22): You are likely to make the wrong decision emotionally. Carelessness will lead to minor accidents in the home. Don't try to do a job that you should have hired a professional to do.

LEO (July 23-Aug. 22): Don't expect your good friends to be able to keep a secret. You will be disappointed if you haven't been able to interest others in your ideas. Don't be too hard on yourself.

VIRGO (Aug. 23-Sept. 22): If you have to work with someone else, they will try to take all the credit. Take self-awareness and motivation programs to help you stand up for your rights and be more confident.

LIBRA (Sept. 23-Oct. 22): Your emotions will soar with the intriguing romantic connections you can make. Business opportunities look promising. Partnerships can be lucrative.

SCORPIO (Oct. 23-Nov. 21): The best results will come from the hard work you do. Don't let others lead you in directions that are not in your best interests. Keep private affairs to yourself. You will be misinterpreted if you aren't precise about your beliefs.

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22-Dec. 21): It's a great day to ask for favors. Others will gravitate to you and support you in your efforts. Group functions will result in greater popularity.

CAPRICORN (Dec. 22-Jan. 19): You can expect to have problems with your lover. It may be a good idea to just get out with friends, or be involved in physical sports activity that will help ease the tension.

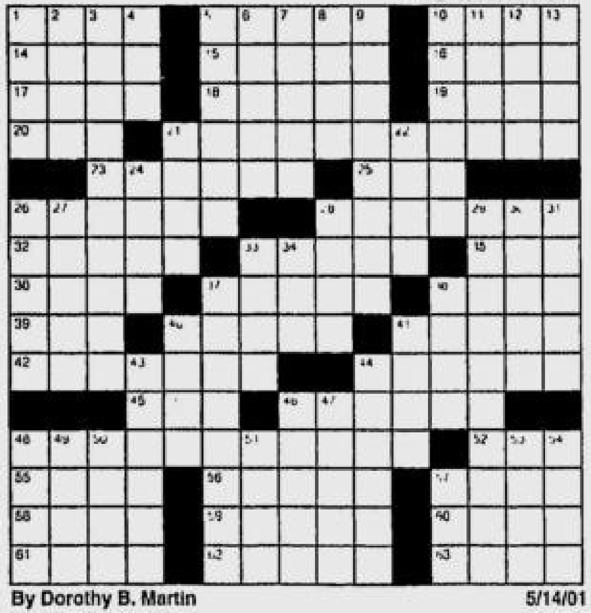
AQUARIUS (Jan. 20-Feb. 18): Spend time with that special person you've been neglecting. Don't invite any friends over; you need to rekindle the flame.

PISCES (Feb. 19-March 20): Avoid risky financial ventures or gambling. You can make money if you are conservative in your dealings. Visit a friend or relative who hasn't been well.

Birthday Baby: You are charming, graceful and full of sophistication. Your bright eyes and obvious intelligence will lead you in a direction that will reward your talents and ability.

DAILY CROSSWORD

TMSPuzzles@aol.com



By Dorothy B. Martin
Highland Park, MI
5/14/01

ACROSS
1 Obligation
5 One not mentioned
10 Hall or Pitt
14 Challenge
15 Vestige
16 Top-drawer
17 On a cruise
18 __ firma
19 Zilch
20 Affirmative vote
21 Head counter
23 Lack
25 Chip off the old block
26 Monastery leaders
28 Keeps from proceeding
32 Breaks from a habit
33 Irregularly notched
35 Barracks bed
36 Spacious ships
37 News media
38 Presidential stopper
39 Ill temper
40 Hang in loose folds
41 Rome's river
42 Takes one's time
44 Strong-red shade
45 Emma's twins?
46 City near Rawalpindi
48 Brewer
52 Inquire
55 Maui feast
56 "Casablanca" co-star
57 Dust Bowl migrant
58 Makes a move
59 Corporate images
60 Small valley
61 Shout of joy
62 Hard-hearted
63 Hit the dirt

DOWN
1 6/6/44
2 Palliate
3 Sourdough pro?
4 Herbal beverage
5 Playful mammals
6 Senator Lott of Mississippi
7 Grating
8 Tan shade
9 Appraise anew
10 Split fruit
11 Chess piece
12 Archer or Bancroft
13 Moose's relative
21 Felines
22 Carryall
24 Ages and ages
26 Stand by
27 Legendary Yogi
28 Medicinal quantity
29 Opening remark
30 Stenographer
31 Tale
33 Periods
34 Agt.
37 Finds buyers beforehand
38 Contender
40 Roosevelt coin
41 Norse god of thunder
43 Turn down
44 Of poor quality
46 Key __, FL
47 City near Cleveland
48 Talon
49 Sound of pain
50 Kismet
51 Meaningless
53 Farm storage tower
54 Coarse seaweed
57 Quirky

PREVIOUS PUZZLE ANSWER

I	S	S	U	E	R	S	■	H	U	N	D	R	E	D
S	T	A	M	M	E	L	■	A	S	A	R	U	L	E
R	E	L	A	P	S	E	■	R	E	T	I	T	L	E
A	P	E	■	T	H	E	■	E	L	A	P	S	E	D
E	L	S	■	Y	A	P	■	M	E	L	■	■	■	■
L	I	T	E	■	P	E	G	■	S	I	T	S	U	P
I	V	A	N	■	E	R	R	■	S	E	R	E	N	A
T	E	X	A	S	■	S	A	L	■	S	E	A	R	S
E	L	E	C	T	S	■	D	E	S	■	A	C	E	S
S	Y	S	T	E	M	■	E	V	A	■	T	A	P	E
■	■	■	■	M	E	T	■	E	T	C	■	P	E	N
A	N	T	I	W	A	R	■	L	I	E	■	T	A	G
D	A	Y	C	A	R	E	■	P	A	L	E	A	L	E
A	M	P	E	R	E	S	■	A	T	E	L	I	E	R
S	E	E	D	E	R	S	■	R	E	B	I	N	D	S

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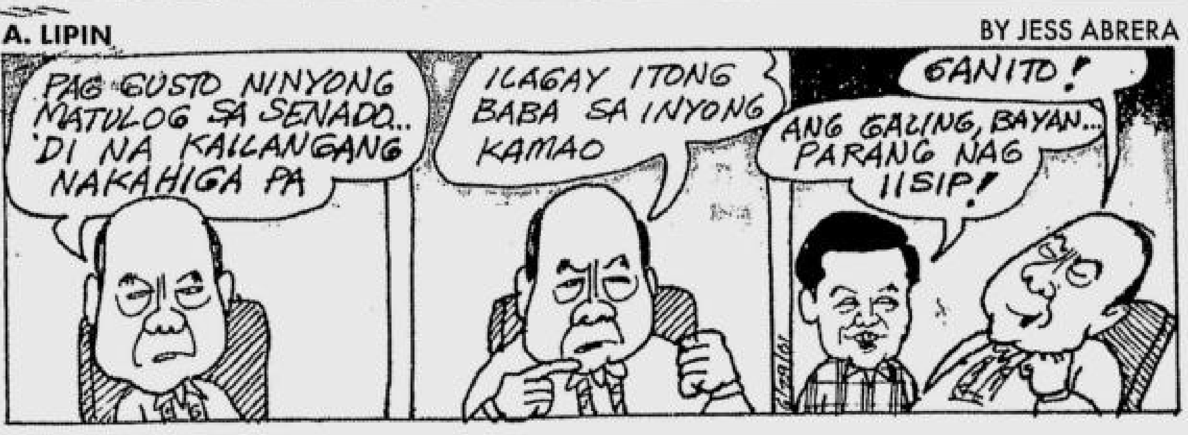
5/14/01

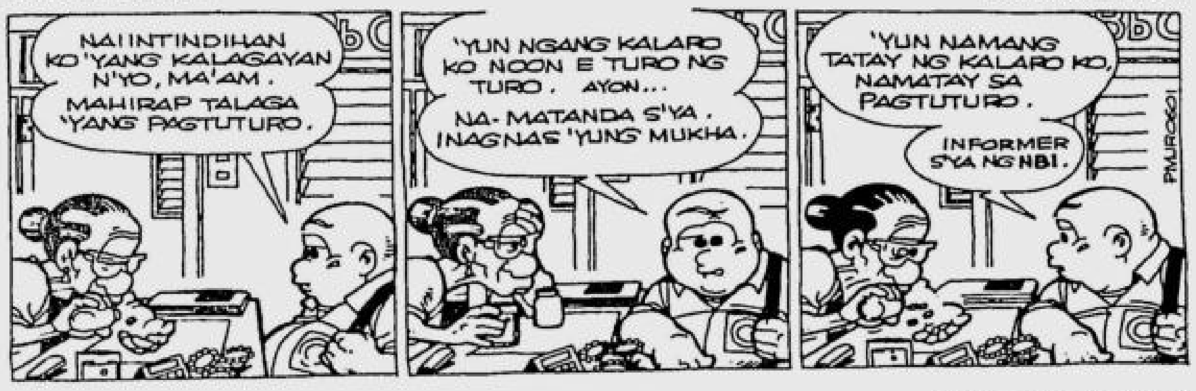
A. LIPIN

BY JESS ABRERA


PAG GUSTO NINYONG MATULOG SA SENADO.. 'DI NA KAILANGANG NAKAHIGA PA
ILAGAY ITONG BABA SA INYONG KAMAO
GANITO!
ANG GALING, BAYAN... PARANG NAG IISIP!

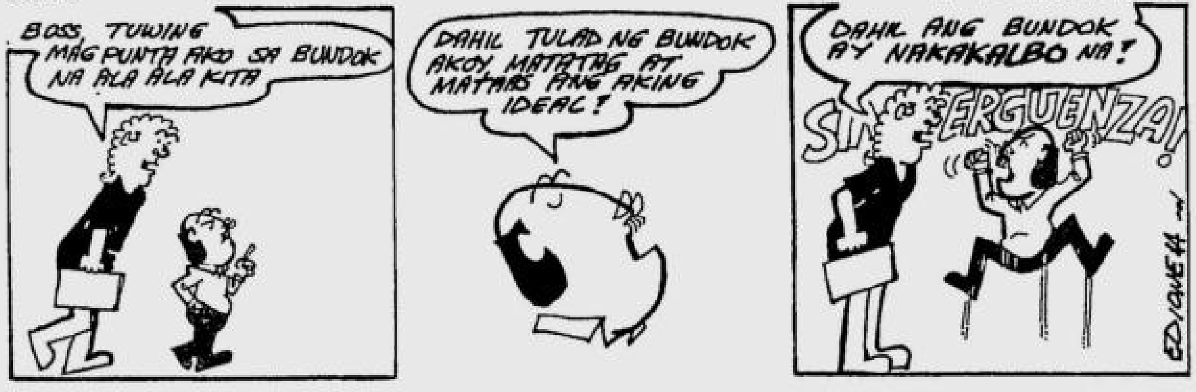
PUGAD BABOY

BY P.M. JUNIOR


NAIINTINDIHAN KO 'YANG KALAGAYAN N'YO, MA'AM. MAHIRAP TALAGA 'YANG PAGTUTURO.
'YUN NGANG KALARO KO NOON E TURO NG TURO. AYON... NA-MATANDA S'YA. INAGNAS 'YUNG MUKHA.
'YUN NAMANG TATAY NG KALARO KO, NAMATAY SA PAGTUTURO.
INFORMER S'YA NG NBI.
PMJR2001

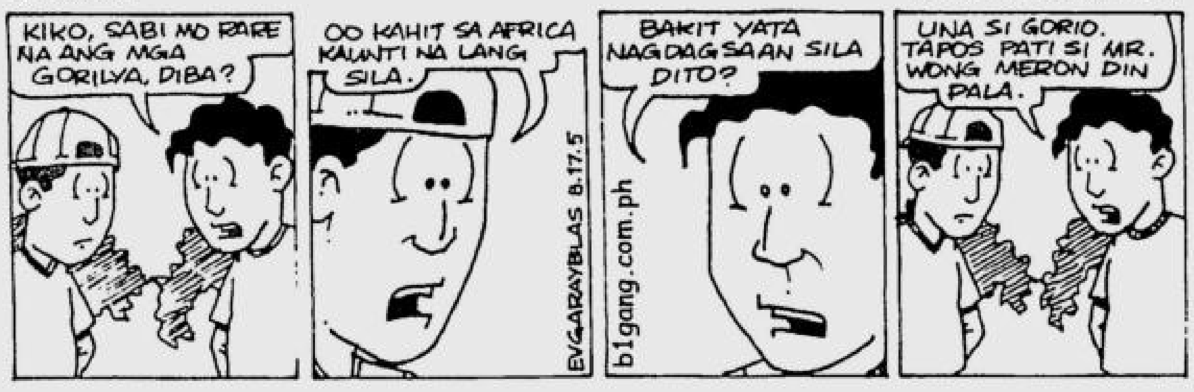
SIMO

BY EDGAR DIONELA


BOSS, TUWING MAG PUNTA AKO SA BUNDOK NA ALA ALA KITA
DAHIL TULAD NG BUNDOK AKOY MATATAG AT MATAAS ANG AKING IDEAL!
DAHIL ANG BUNDOK AY NAKAKALBO NA!
SINVERGUENZA!
EDIONELA

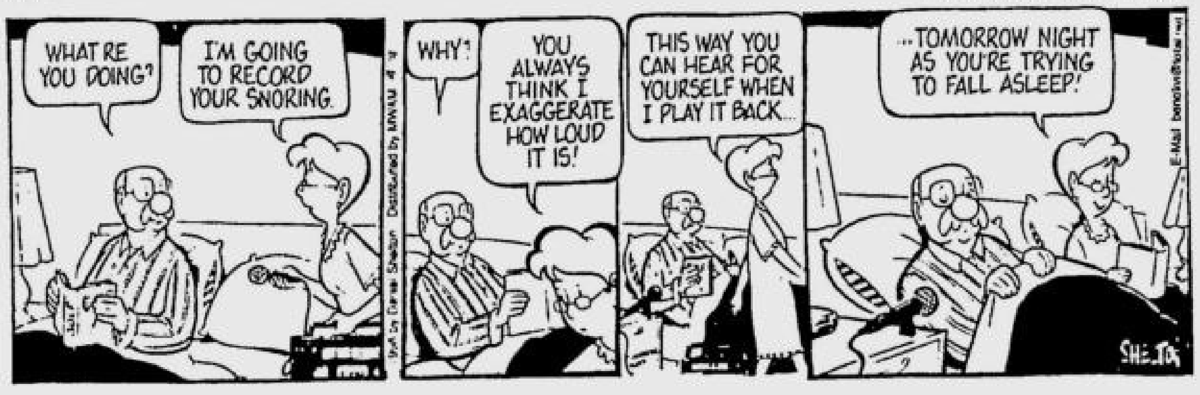
B1 GANG

BY ATS11/ JEA/ FEVG


KIKO, SABI MO RARE NA ANG MGA GORILYA, DIBA?
OO KAHIT SA AFRICA KAUNTI NA LANG SILA.
BAKIT YATA NAGDAGSAAN SILA DITO?
UNA SI GORIO. TAPOS PATI SI MR. WONG MERON DIN PALA.
EVGARAYBLAS 8.17.5
b1gang.com.ph

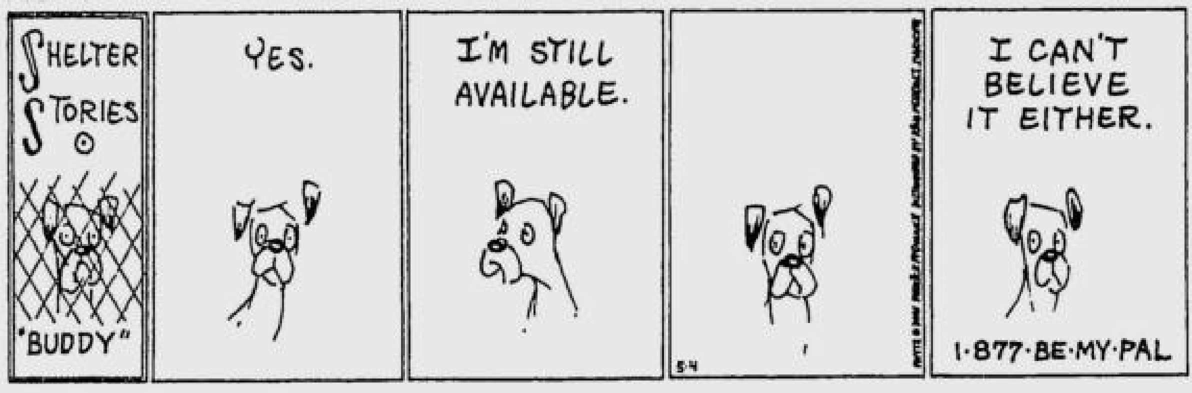
BEN

BY DANIEL SHELTON


WHAT'RE YOU DOING?
I'M GOING TO RECORD YOUR SNORING.
WHY?
YOU ALWAYS THINK I EXAGGERATE HOW LOUD IT IS!
THIS WAY YOU CAN HEAR FOR YOURSELF WHEN I PLAY IT BACK...
...TOMORROW NIGHT AS YOU'RE TRYING TO FALL ASLEEP!
SHELTON

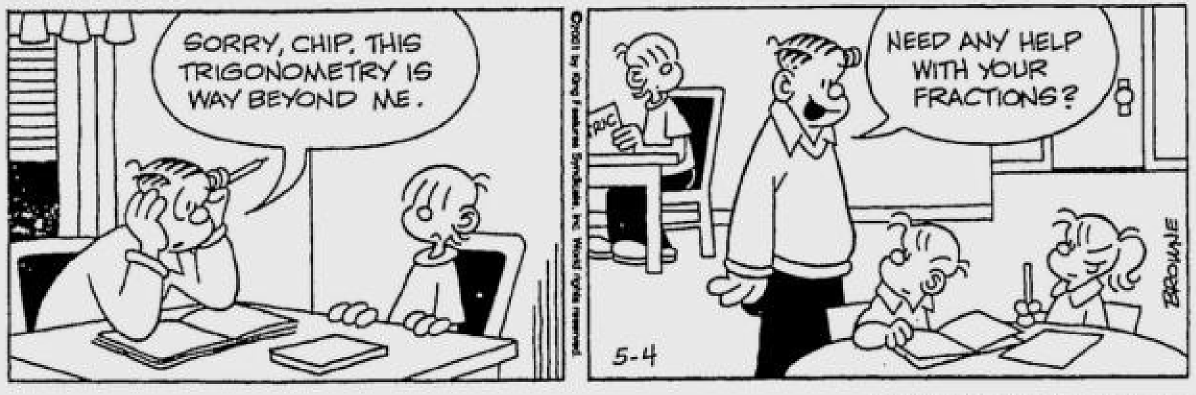
MUTTS

BY PATRICK McDONNELL


SHELTER STORIES
"BUDDY"
YES.
I'M STILL AVAILABLE.
5-4
I CAN'T BELIEVE IT EITHER.
1-877-BE-MY-PAL

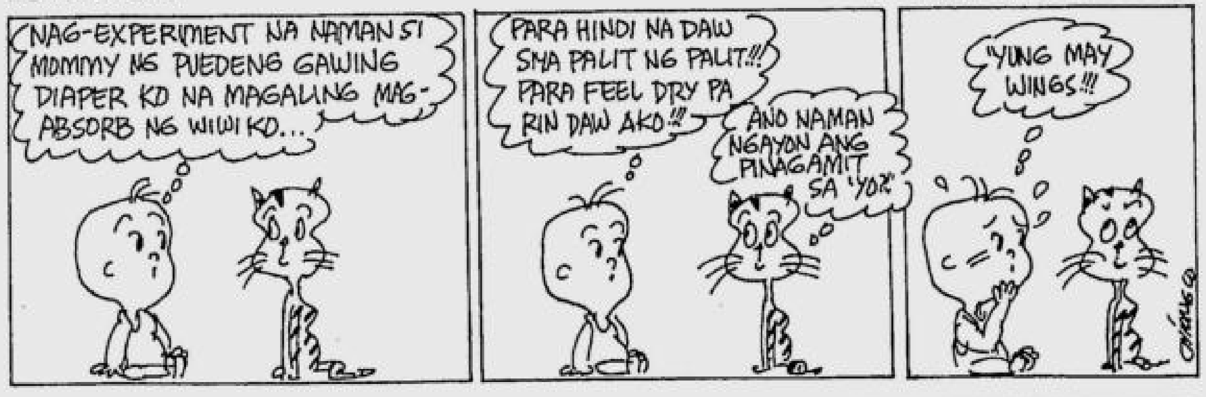
HI AND LOIS

BY BRIAN & GREG WALKER


SORRY, CHIP. THIS TRIGONOMETRY IS WAY BEYOND ME.
NEED ANY HELP WITH YOUR FRACTIONS?
5-4
BROWNE

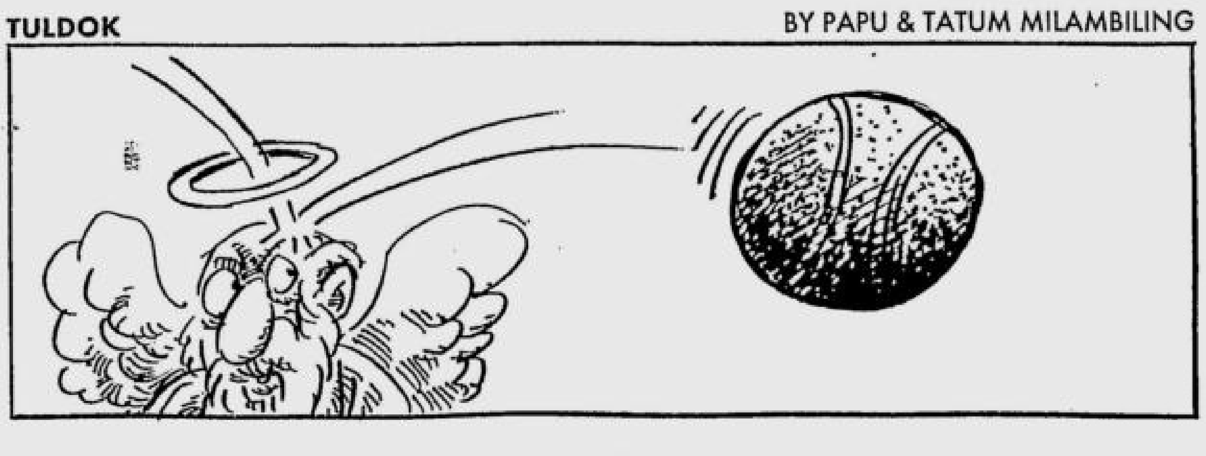
LOVEKNOTS

BY ELIZABETH CHIONGLO


NAG-EXPERIMENT NA NAMAN SI MOMMY NG PUEDENG GAWING DIAPER KO NA MAGALING MAG-ABSORB NG WIWI KO...
PARA HINDI NA DAW SIYA PALIT NG PALIT!!! PARA FEEL DRY PA RIN DAW AKO!!!
ANO NAMAN NGAYON ANG PINAGAMIT SA 'YO?
'YUNG MAY WINGS!!!

TULDOK

BY PAPU & TATUM MILAMBILING



Losing city parks

SEEING GREEN

Doris Gaskell Nuyda

THE LOSS of a city park or garden is as tragic as the loss of a forest. The difference is that while forests belong in the mountains or the wild, a park is built as a green haven for congested urban centers. Both, however, offer breathing spaces and habitats for healthy growth—human as well as wildlife.

What is happening at the Arroceros Forest Park and the Mehan Garden near the Manila City Hall, would mean just such a loss. For if nothing is done about it soon, those park areas will give way to the City Colleges of Manila. On the outset, it doesn't seem tragic. After all, there is a serious need for more educational institutions in the city to serve the need of the big youth population. But to build the schools on land that is already marked out for a park or garden is not to think of the needs of Manileños in a holistic manner. People need schools, but they also need places to reenergize, in many instances, to keep their sanity about them. Parks and gardens amid crowded office buildings and busy thoroughfares fulfill that need. They are places in which to seek solace and fresh air, away from the smoke of vehicular traffic and congestion of enclosed office rooms.

So the question conservationists and environmentalists now ask is not: Why build schools? But: Why build them in old parks and gardens? After all, those parks are already there and could easily be restored with little maintenance. There are other sites in which to build campuses. Don't destroy property that already exists, with its function already well defined, with its history marking it out as a city landmark, history that can be shown to all, Manileños and visitors alike.

History should be taught not only in schools, but also whenever and wherever it took place or was created. In cities like London, for instance, old, historic buildings are continuously being restored and conserved, upholding national "pride of place." Those places define a people. Heaven knows how much we need a bit of that pride for. Many times, we don't even know who we are!

The Arroceros Forest Park was a vision shared by former First Lady Amelita M. Ramos and former City Mayor Alfredo Lim. With Ms Ramos leading the way, an organization called Winner Foundation was organized in 1993 for the purpose of creating a city park. DECS had vacated its offices in the area and so the place was open for conversion into a green space.

The Mehan Garden just across it was ready-made for such conversion, although at the time it was in a dilapidated state. Conservationists are now inquiring about city ordinances that prohibit use of public gardens for other purposes, and without permission of the National Historic Institute (NHI) in charge of their preservation.

The Heritage Conservation Society (HCS), another concerned body, reminds us that "(o)riginally established in 1858 as the Jardin Botanico, Mehan Garden was the first zoological and botanical garden in Manila. In 1913, the park was renamed Mehan Garden after John C. Mehan, the park's American superintendent."

What adds to the sad state of city park affairs is that the areas in question lie in close proximity to the Pasig River, which is also an object of rehabilitation. To environmentalists and conservationists like Toti Villalon, president and chair of the HCS, the maintenance of the city forest park and garden was becoming a beautiful complement to river rehabilitation work. With the loss of the park, that beautiful vision likewise goes phfft. To Tina Testa of the NHI, historical landmarks that also provide services (in this case, breathing areas for city dwellers) should be maintained, not destroyed.

Archaeological site

While Villalon describes Mehan Garden today as badly in need of repair, he also points out that as a landmark, its value goes far beyond the historical for it is also an archaeological site, and was even declared such by the National Museum. But budget constraints made excavation impossible.

What lies under the Mehan Garden? Archaeologists and conservationists believe that the foundation of the Parian lies there. They describe the location of the Mehan Garden as at the center of the area stretching from Puerta Parian in Intramuros to the Arroceros street banks of the Pasig. We are reminded that "(t)he Parian is the place where Spanish authorities quartered the Chinese in colonial days, making sure that when they were shut out of Intramuros at night, they still remained within cannon shot." (From this, it is easy to understand why the Chinese eventually relocated themselves to the nearby Binondo area.)

It seems it is not only the Parian that still lies buried under the Mehan, but also many other archaeological artifacts that could reveal still-unknown aspects of Manila's history. But no one has bothered to unearth the mysteries of underground Manila; instead, everybody has tried to build over them.

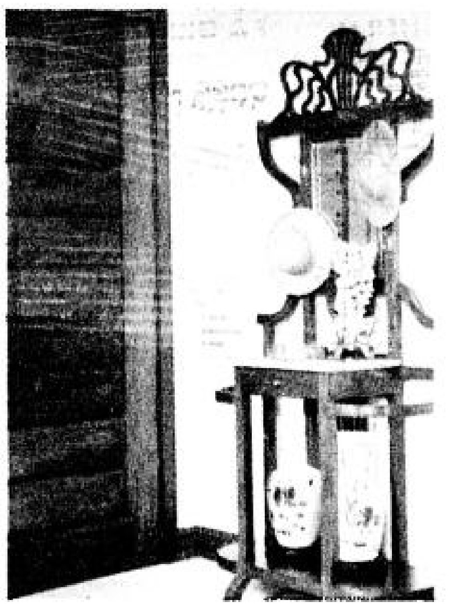
Villalon also decries the lack of what he calls "pride of place" that makes the city government forget the rich heritage of the past found in those places that could well be shown off in museums or pointed to as tourist destinations for visitors, researchers and history buffs.

It is sad, he says, that preserving historical areas is no longer the great concern of the city's leaders. It is sadder yet that Manileños who need a park "to vent their pressures amid greens rather than more concrete," are not getting it. In fact, they are losing what is already there and in need only of minimal restoration work.

To Villalon and Testa and other conservationists like them, it is time that our public breathing spaces like Arroceros Forest Park and Mehan Gardens be given the respect and care that they deserve, that never again should they be threatened by some plan to convert them into part of our concrete jungle!

If not, Villalon adds, the time may come when parks and gardens will become as rare to city kids as carabaos and rice paddies. And there, more tragedy lies.

STEPS leading to the main door



THE ARCHITECTURE may be Japanese-inspired, but the furniture pieces, such as the étagère, mostly carry Filipino influences.

Zen reinterpreted and rarefied

(From page F2)

serves. Well, so does Cor, the captain of her high school and collegiate basketball team. Again, she resorts to *mitate* by converting several stone grinders to a series of stepping stones.

The country's tropical climate didn't hinder her from simulating a Japanese garden. Of course, bamboo thrives in the Philippines as well as in Japan. In the absence of the ubiquitous cherry blossoms, Cor had several *calachuchi* trees blooming with fuchsia flowers planted outside the property's perimeter wall. Despite her busy schedule, she still finds time to raise potted plants, which she gives to friends as gifts.

Part of the sidewalk outside, for instance, has been landscaped with mounds of earth, planted with Bermuda grass and festooned with huge river rocks. Believe it or not, it took 10 men almost forever to arrange these objects. "I wanted to show their (the rocks') best sides," says Cor with a chuckle. She was actually just being true to her beliefs.

Idealized

"The gardens of Japan," says one of her books, "are works of art that use nature as a material of creation. The utmost design principle, therefore, is to learn from nature. While Japanese garden designers derive inspiration from nature, the gardens they create are not "natural" or wild. Nature is reinterpreted, rarefied and abstracted so that what is created isn't nature per se, but an idealized vision of nature."

True to the traditions of Japanese architecture, Cor employed several elements to bring the outside in. To provide continuity and an illusion of space, for instance, the white Portuguese floor tiles inside the house extend all the way to the terrace. Wood and faux railings following Japanese lines guard most of the first floor, including a small balcony accessible from the den. A flight of concrete stairs leads to the main double door made of *narra*.

"Danny Daez, our contractor, did a good job," says Cor. "He was able to source everything we needed without cutting corners." She chose beige for the walls and varnished wood for the ceiling.

For practical and security reasons, Cor did away with authentic *shoji* windows fashioned from thin strips of wood and paper. Rather, big picture windows, albeit with metal bars, offer a view of the garden. "They're like *shoji* windows the minute I roll down the blinds."

The second floor leads to a hall overlooking the living room and several picture windows a few feet from a ledge. Again, the round window several meters above the main door is Japanese. Identical railings inspired by minimalist Japanese lines guard the area, which doubles as the couple's exercise area. The third floor leads to the attic, where the family's study is located.

Eclectic

Cor is more eclectic, however, in her choice of furniture. Family heirlooms, such as the étagère, the console table and the study table that have been transported from her ancestral home in Negros, are combined with newer pieces bought from popular furniture and home stores. Cor wears her admiration for Filipino painters Tam Austria, Cesar Amorsolo, Moscoso, Lamarroza and Malang on her walls.

Again, she acquired the works of art for a reason. "I analyze things too much," she confesses. "The one by Moscoso is close to my heart because it depicts *sacadas*. The six male figures represent my brothers, and the female figure is me."

Oddly enough, Cor was never into anything Japanese until a Japanese classmate introduced her to the country's culture. In fact, some members of her family, a political clan in Negros, suffered directly in the hands of Japanese soldiers during the last war.

"I learned more about them as a people," she recalls, "from working with them while developing a project in El Nido. From what I saw, they're very polite and hardworking people."

War, it has often been said, brings out the worst in people. The Japanese were no exception. Its Imperial army, however, didn't have the franchise to atrocities during the war. Fortunately, peace has brought out the best in the Japanese. Cor, ever the optimist, has chosen to focus on the good side.

E-mail the author at avergara@inquirer.com.ph

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LH LEO
288
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Worrying about losing her friends has affected her studies

LIVE AND LET LIVE

Tita Dulce

DEAR Tita Dulce,

I am a 20-year-old computer science student. May I ask for your advice regarding my relationship with my friends?

For about nine months last year, the *barkada* experienced changes that I cannot accept even though I played a part in those changes.

We were four in the *barkada*. My partner in the group was the one I considered my one and only best friend. We were happy when we were together and we've been through a lot.

But something happened and now my best friend is not my partner anymore. She is still one of the *barkada*, but it's not the same as before. I miss her very much.

When the whole *barkada* was together, like when we were in school, and I would see her with another girl, I would get jealous. This was the reason I moved away from them.

Emotionally and sometimes physically I'm not the same as before. The reason I gave for moving away from them is that I have a "tense feeling" inside. They understood and they gave me space. But then, from this, my problem came up.

The space became too much. The *barkada* seemed to be divided. We started doing different things and gimmicks. When we are together, it's not the same as before. Everybody began to feel shy with each other because of the gap.

I know it's my fault, that's why at one point I made a plan that we would meet at the usual place and talk about things, but then it didn't push through. I realized that the others didn't want to talk about the past. They just want to move on. But I don't.

And now the semester is here and we still have our thesis to work on. The thesis is the reason we did not graduate last March. We did not pass. To tell you honestly, it's because we let our personal feelings interfere with our studies. I don't want to let it happen again. I don't want to disappoint our parents again. I'm starting to feel afraid because we may never pass, if we, or I, still don't move on and accept everything.

That's my problem. I just can't move on. I need to talk about the past, to pour it out and say sorry for all my faults. But how can I do it if they don't want to? I don't want to force them; it may lead to another problem.

Are there other ways to solve my problem? How can I accept that my best friend and I may not be partners again? Is there any way to bring us back together? Please help. Thank you.

GIRLFRIEND

You only have four months to finish your thesis. The best thing to do now is to concentrate on what you have to do, think of your future and make up your mind to do the best you can.

To clear your mind about what bothers you about the past, write a letter to your *barkada*. Make three copies of it since you say there are four of you. Express what you had wanted to say in that failed get-together. That will clear your mind. Don't expect any answer. They will surely read what you wrote to them, but they may be short of words, and also, they will be concentrating on their studies.

Now to focus on what bothers you about your best friend, as to whether you will not be partners again. My dear, it is time to realize and accept the fact that each of you have your own life to live, and the future may not place you on the same road. If both of you are hired by the same company, well and good. But in this day and age, jobs are often hard to find. Both of you may work here in Metro Manila but your offices may be 10 km apart.

If there is a guidance counselor where you are studying, express your mental pain to her or to him. If there is none, then it is just time to strengthen yourself. You can also look around and find another friend. If that best friend you miss also misses you, she will welcome your call. If she ignores you, the message is clear. She is also concentrating on her future.

Live each day to the fullest, by doing what you have to do for your thesis, to make sure you do not disappoint your parents again. It is painful to lose a friend, yes, but it will be more painful to start each day just thinking of the loss, seeing everything dark instead of enjoying the bright sun and working for a brighter future.

Fake dollar bill

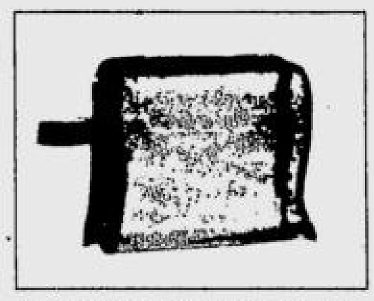
LAST year I bought a hundred dollars from a woman who said she needed money for her sick daughter. She sold it for only P3,000. Recently, when the dollar went up to P50, I went to a bank to have it cashed, but the teller said it was counterfeit. I cannot find that woman because it happened when I was walking out of the domestic airport after arriving from the province. Is this a common happening in Manila? Did I make a mistake, just thinking I could help that woman and her daughter?

BOBBY

Next time, if you really want to buy dollars, go to a bank and show your ID. Or, if someone again offers to sell you dollars, and it's for cheap, tell the seller to go with you to a bank first, and show the bank note to the teller.

The new dollar bills are printed with color-shifting ink. For example, on a $100 bill, the number on the lower right corner on the front looks green when viewed straight on, but appears black when viewed at an angle. However, If you have some old denominations, they are still acceptable.

E-mail the author at titadulce@netscape.net or send letters to P.O. Box 2353, Makati CPO 1263 Makati City, or PDI, Chino Roces Avenue corner Yague and Mascardo Streets, Makati City



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'The future is not in here'

To migrate or not to migrate—that's what people are talking about. Here is the tale of five immigrants who have defined their sense of place

HARVEY'S bench sculpture made of ash wood pieces joined together

LIFE-STYLED

Thelma Sioson San Juan

"MA, what if I write about whether to migrate or not to migrate?" my son asked me regarding his possible column topic. "Because my friends are talking about it."

That's it. Thinking of this option for the future must be getting contagious. I hear young and not-so-young people are thinking of migrating, because "where is this country headed?"

I've always dismissed that as a joke or a seasonal escapist thought—until I heard my own 21-year-old son, who just graduated last March, catching that vibration of a possibility from his circle. Then I remembered that just a few weeks ago, he wrote about his travel to Vienna in his column and waxed ecstatic about how clean that place is, how nice the quality of life, and so on, and how it wouldn't be such a bad idea if he lived there. My son? My 21-year-old baby?

Thank god, my 15-year-old is so wrapped up in his CDs and network gaming to know what migrating means.

But really, these days, no matter what your lunch is, talk inevitably leads to Abu Sayyaf, the kidnappings, the garbage that wouldn't go away, the trash that Metro Manila living is turning into, the sickening corruption, and so on. We've been there, we've done that, yet we're stuck in an age-old mess.

You get that "no exit" feeling.

At lunch the other day, as we bashed **Lito Atienza**'s yet another brazen move to destroy a landmark, the Mehan Garden, our friend, the absolute designer **Budji Layug**, let out a very valid whine—"We're not only an educated people, we're also good at design and aesthetics. We're in the know, and yet we continue to deface our city. We don't even care to keep our parks, our trees; we don't even care to keep [them] clean. We have no love of our past or our present."

Then what he said rang in my mind the whole day—"Perhaps it's true, the future is not in here."

Filipino artisanship

No, we can't give up. We shouldn't let the Abus and the Atienzas of this world redefine our country for us. I turned to our other lunchmate, **Eli Pinto-Mansor**, and realized that the likes of Eli and Budji make you not give up. No

THE FUTURE/p.G3

MARK Harvey with Eli Pinto-Mansor

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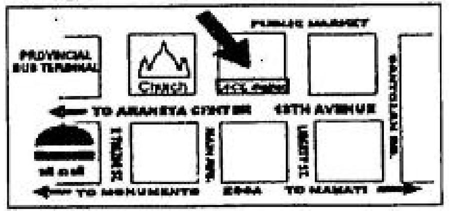

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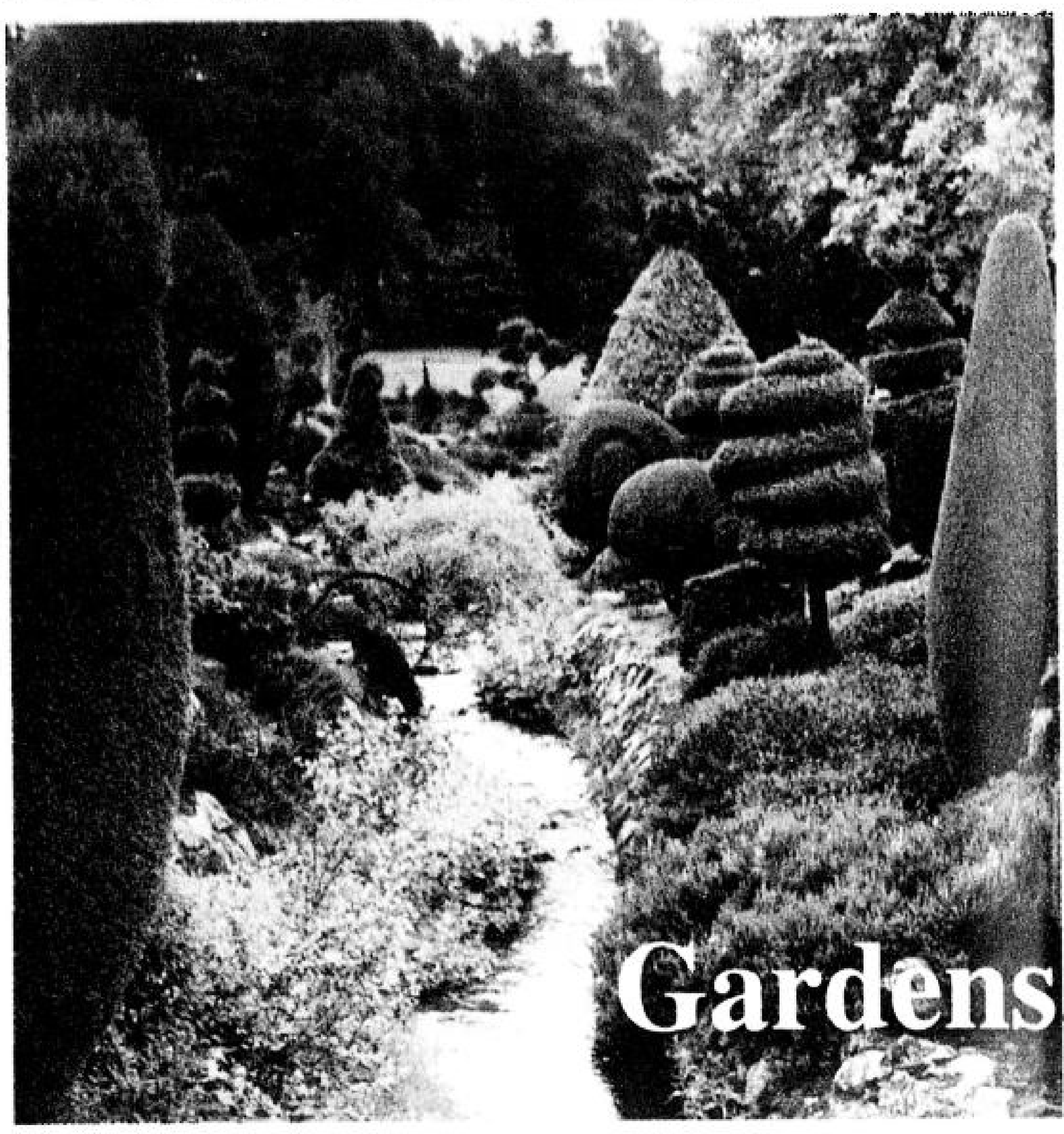

A COLLECTION of fantastic topiaries alongside a stream

YVES St. Laurent restored this garden in Morocco filled with coconut palms, bananas and bougainvillea and Majorelle blue walls.

Gardens, borrowings and history

The World of Garden Design
By Susan Dooley and the editors of Garden Design Magazine

By Adrian Lizares

ARCHITECT Luis Barragan drew on his travels in North Africa and Europe to create vibrant structures and gardens filled with light and color in Mexico.

MANY garden books published in the West bring out new ideas that may look bright but are inapplicable to our surroundings. As our country is belted around the equator, we should take plant tips that are relative to our surroundings.

REVIEW

But in the universal language of gardens, one publication has both encompassed and transcended time and climate zones to bring us lots of useful information. This is Garden Design magazine. Recently it has come up with a book teeming with brilliant ideas and putting forth a proper perspective on gardening—"The World of Garden Design." As the author puts it, "American gardeners have taken plants and borrowed design ideas from all over the world." I guess this book is their way of giving back to others the ideas they have drawn from other original inspirations.

Historically, civilizations drew inspirations from one another to craft their gardens. The Greeks drew from the Persians, the Romans from the Greeks. The French took after the Italians while the Dutch looked to the direction of the French. In Asia, the Japanese garden drew its inspiration from China. Thailand also adopted the Chinese style to evolve its own idea of gardening.

A book shows that
civilizations through
history have adopted
the best features
of gardens
of other civilizations.
That, in a nutshell,
explains the fantastic
growth of gardens

History

Western travelers of ancient times took back to their cities what they saw from Asia, so up came the glasshouses, man's clever trick to make sure that he is always in control. The cycle goes on until today. We draw a lot of our inspirations from the copious beauty we have experienced in many of our travels.

It is also history that is an important factor in determining the success of any garden style. As the book shows, American garden history from the 16th century up to the present provides entertaining insights into the origins of the American garden—as when the classic American lawn was born after the colonizers imported English grasses to feed livestock. Then there was the craze a century ago for Florentine gardens as exemplified in Edith Wharton's "Italian Villas and Their Gardens" (1904), with illustrations by Maxfield Parrish. The book set the pace for American vogue gardens. How the American garden has evolved is also parallel to the evolution of this county's garden clubs and horticultural societies.

It is also fascinating to read about the origins of certain plants and how they have reached full orbit around the world, achieving status as ornamental delights or symbols of, among other things, love.

While it is true that travel enriches the mind and hones the eye, reading gets one to places and just as effectively makes the taste sharper. And this book is going to take you on a brief but explosive tour around the gardens of the world.

Youth

I have always believed in gardens as essentially an anchor to the youth that we have always longed for. Gardens will always be associated with our childhood. When I work on any garden project these days, I always feed from the memories of all the gardens I experienced in my youth. I do recall trying to raise an enclosed garden in the Continental style using hedges that promised to grow into walls that would conceal part of the garden which extended from our porch. It had a few openings, which I set aside for passage, with the hope that the adjacent hedge would grow tall enough to become an arch. Well, it has been 10 years since and the hedge is still on its way to becoming that permanent enclosure that will evolve into yet another space to contemplate upon. A garden is forever!

What I have picked up and resurrected from this book are words like parterre, roof gardens, potagers, grottoes and pergola. Container gardening is and always will be a fundamental way of treating form and function. The idea of ornamentation is ripe. What would the world be without accessories? The use of indigenous materials that are fashioned into fantastic fountains is one way of turning stone into something that draws the eye. The elements like earth and water are a must to consider in your next garden project. But more than anything, what will bring magic to your garden is whimsy.

Perhaps above all, your garden will have to mirror your psyche—that is, if you have the time and the will to start one! Remember: No guts, no garden!

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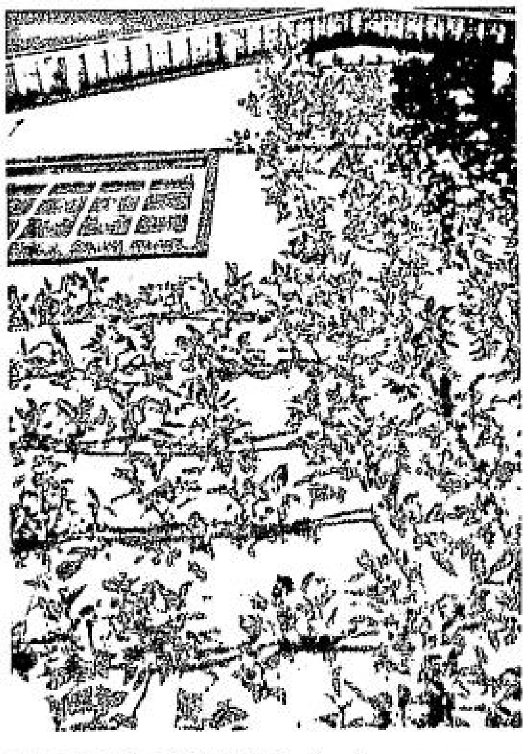
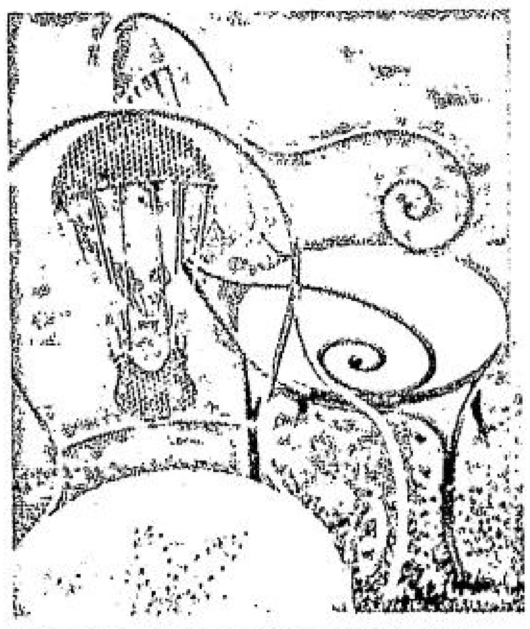


VERTICAL ELEMENTS. Apples are grown against the wall.

PUMPKINS and squash overflow the wattle fencing. An edging made of tree saplings was favored by gardeners in ancient times.

TSUKUBAI is an arrangement of stones in a tea garden, including a water basin, used for the ritual cleansing of hands and mouth and a stone to hold a lantern.



VINTAGE outdoor accessories such as the florid, curly metal pieces provide a touch of attitude.

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'The future is not in here'

(From page G1)

matter the odds and bureaucratic hurdles, Citem's Eli hasn't given up projecting the worth of Filipino design talent abroad. They're storming the gates of world design business just to let it know that Filipinos have something worth buying. They're cracking their brains and tapping their network for investors to market Philippine furniture and furnishings abroad—that's going above and beyond Eli's job. Just this month, fashion designer **Cesar Gaupo** has been tapped by the high-end Shanghai Tang to do its collections abroad.

It's people like them who try to even up the score where the Filipino self-esteem is concerned, no matter that the scoundrels in high places or out there in the jungle try to undo things.

This is as good a time to tell you about the Filipinos I touched base with in New York last month. They continue to make a name for themselves, their country, and help.

Of course, New York is **Josie Natori**'s turf. Josie's Natori lines continue to expand. To her high-end lingerie and clothes, she's adding the more affordable RTW line called Cruz. Better yet, she's using Filipino craftsmanship for intricately embroidered evening bags—artisanship being the vogue in fashion accessories. Her bags fuse the precious elements of Orientalia—fine Philippine wood, Chinese jade, Indian and Filipino embroidery and lace—and cast them in chic, sleek designs, with clean, geometric shapes and lines. These bags will be launched in September.

She's also given the "pashmina look" a twist. She's turned the *piña* and Philippine silk into a shawl accented with dainty embroidery and subtle glitter.

But Josie goes beyond business. She continues to promote the country through Asia Society, which will inaugurate its new building in Manhattan this October. She also helps talented Filipinos from the provinces. Working with Manhattanville College and the advertising giant DDB, she helped the search for young scholars in Asia under the program Creative Youth Scholarship Challenge.

In this contest, students submitted essays and artworks. The winner chosen recently was a Filipino—**Romar Dulay**, who just graduated from the Regional Science High School in Olongapo.

Romar wrote a touching essay about a bright new day—a happy view of the world one could hardly expect from an only child who lives alone in Olongapo. His mother has to work in the Middle East. With Josie's help, Romar was brought to New York where he is now enrolled as a scholar at Manhattanville College. His mother was also flown to New York to attend the awarding.

Making waves

To the likes of Josie, helping her countrymen is done step by patient step. "Everything counts in life—piece by piece," she told us of her efforts to help rebuild the country, even from a distance.

Another Filipino in New York, the supermodel **Anna Bayle** is also out to do her share. With her lipstick line now sold on the Internet, Anna has the time for another venture. She wants to help train budding models in the country get a crack at the world ramp.

Not even known here is a young style connoisseur with a power clientele in the US. **Federico de Vera** is an architecture graduate of UST who moved to Los Angeles in 1984. Today through his stores in San Francisco, he's helping redefine the concept of lifestyle retail.

His stores have fine, artistic stuff—from furniture to jewelry which he sources everywhere, including the Philippines.

Hollywood stars, fashion designers, politicians, billionaires go to him for his cultivated taste. He serves as their "style eye," being able to spot exquisitely designed things everywhere he goes, from high-end stores to flea markets, "even in tacky places," he said. It is his taste and his eye that they pay a premium for.

Among his clients are **Hillary Clinton** who wore the necklace Federico chose for her when she was sworn in as senator.

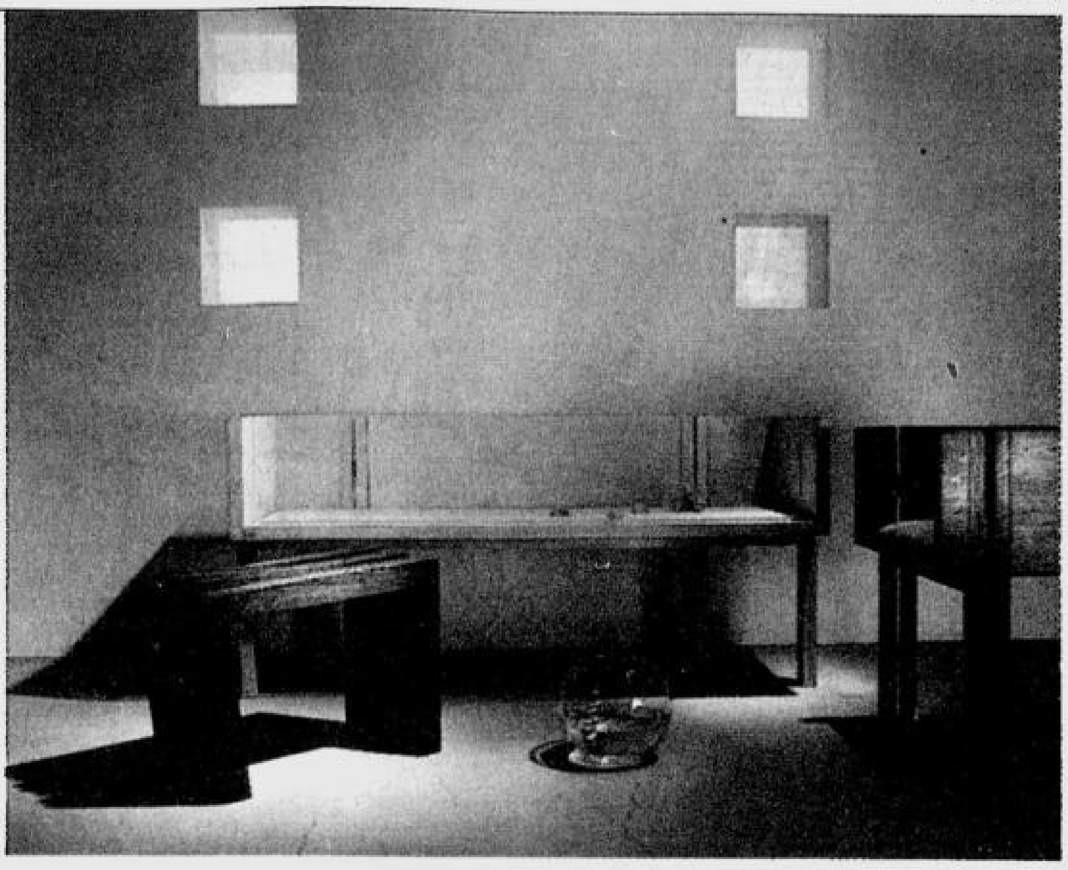
Home-style guru **Martha Stewart** also goes regularly to Federico for her stuff at home. "She prefers mostly casual American things," Federico described Martha's taste.

His clients include fashion legend **Geoffrey Beene** and finance giant **Charles Schwab**.

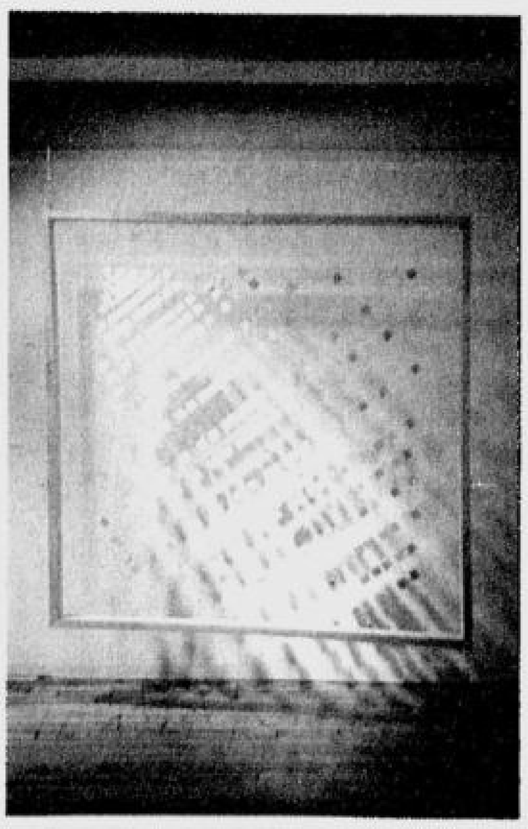
Another young Filipino talent making waves from London to New York is sculptor **Mark Harvey**, the grandson of the late composer **Ramon Tapales**. His mother, **Jammy**, brought him to live

THE FUTURE/p.G4

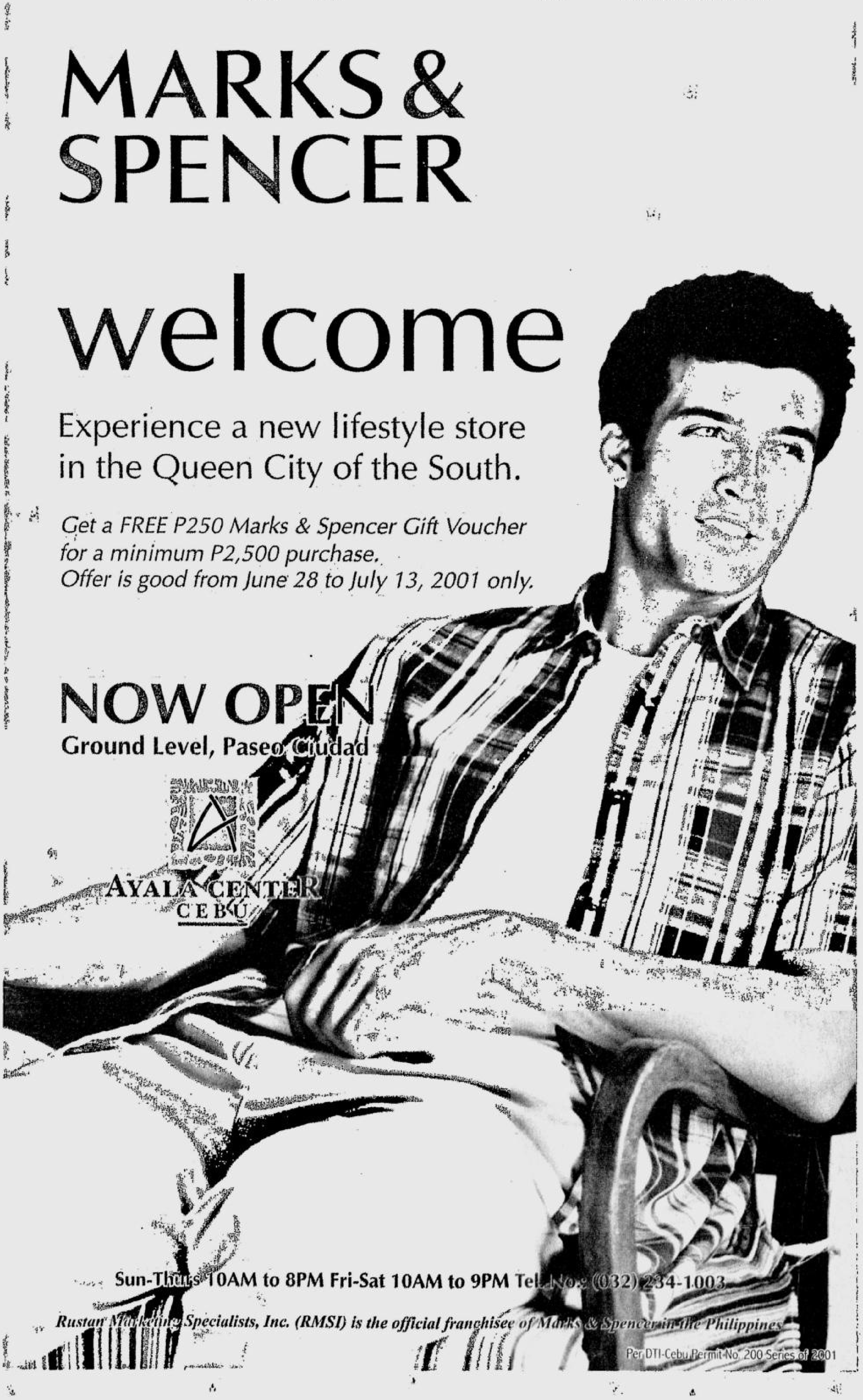
JOSIE Natori's line of evening bags projects Oriental artisanship so in vogue now, to be launched in September.



HARVEY'S furniture carries his writing—"sometimes, the most profound architecture lies in shadow."



HARVEY'S wood divider evokes the music of a lute.



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'The future is not in here'

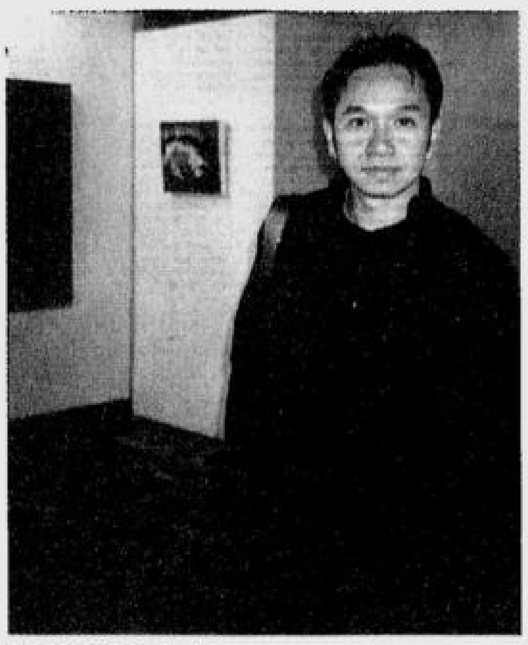
(From page G1)

abroad when Mark was just a kid. A philosophy graduate of Cambridge, he took various jobs in London, including on one Fleet Street, and more than three years ago, he took up sculpture. Since then he has built a following not only in London but also in the US, particularly in Los Angeles where he has a showroom.

We caught him as he was having a one-man exhibit in Soho. He works with wood but what makes his sculpture-furniture notable is how he uses wood not only to combine form and function, but more so, to express his mood and emotion or even his music. Each sculpted furniture, be it a bench or divider, comes with a poignant poetry he's written.

"Wood is much alive," he said, and he reacts to it in the way he pieces it together, he does the finish, or carves its angles.

For instance, the wood divider is made of very fine lines that depict the musical chords that seem to stretch delicately. The effect is the blend of a raw, earthy wood and the lyrical line. He hasn't been back here for 28 years, but his childhood memories inspire his works. "It's hard to explain," he said, when asked to describe those memories that find a concrete form in his works. "Perhaps it's the smell of rain that falls in the heat, or the senses of my childhood."


FEDERICO de Vera

He longs to come back to see his country today.

Function of the heart

Just back here last week was the best-selling fictionist **Arlene Chai**, a Maryknoller whose family moved to Australia in 1982.

Arlene is best known for her novels "The Last Time I Saw Mother" and "Eating Fire And Drinking Water." These works, both set in the Philippines, outsold Australian fiction when they were launched a few years ago in Sydney, but were not so well known here until a year or two ago.

I read "Eating Fire" and couldn't put it down. Though the country is unidentified, it is clearly the Marcos era. It is about a young reporter of the Chronicle (my former newspaper, of all things), an orphan raised by the nuns whose humdrum coverage one day brought her to the secrets of her past. She covers a fire whose fatality, a Chinese storekeeper named Charlie, and whose survivor, a mysterious woman with a stigmata, draw her into the tragedy and drama of the First Quarter Storm, the terror and corrupt rule of a dictator—whose daughter is getting married in ostentatious rites in the province (familiar) and whose downfall has been predicted by a fortune teller (familiar again). It's a riveting tale that is worth the read.

Curiously, when I asked Arlene if she ever worked in the Chronicle or if she was involved in the student activist movement, she said no. In fact, before she left for Australia, she was working in the advertising agency Bates Alcantara, and was hardly familiar with student activism for she led a sheltered life at Maryknoll. "I wasn't playing at being politically conscious," she said.

What she had in mind was the character with the stigmata. She wasn't even intending to write about the Marcos era. What happened was she had her characters and so naturally, she had to frame them in a setting. She read up about the Marcos years, and her story was born. When she began writing, it was as if the characters took control and the story was born.

"I wasn't a product of a creative writing class. I did it by trial and error. I wasn't working with skills or knowledge of the craft. It was part instinct, and part common sense. Just learning to go with the flow," she said.

Getting published was to her a matter of luck. She mailed her manuscript to a publishing house where it was shelved—put in the slash file. One evening, a sales rep of the publishing house picked out her manuscript at random from the files to read at home. She liked it, gave it to the editor who took notice and asked Arlene to submit the rest of the novel. That was how "The Last Time I Saw Mother" got published.

Since her novel was highly acclaimed, four others followed.

All this time, she was working in advertising in Australia. She has quit her job since, and now teaches English. She hasn't written a novel since 1999 and isn't sure if she ever will.

She came here upon the invitation of the Philippine embassy in Australia, the Australian embassy here and the Asia Society, whose head, **Sonia Ner**, of the Ayala Foundation was her teacher at Maryknoll.

Seeing Metro Manila again after all these years made her sad.

"I had an old vista in my head, but it was depressing driving through Edsa. The physical change. They have taken out all the natural things. It's now all reinforced concrete. Perhaps you're living in it so you don't see it, I told my aunt. Aurora Boulevard is so dark. They've taken away the trees. They've taken away my city."

Then as if she couldn't say enough to describe her reintroduction to Metro Manila today, she said, "A city isn't just a function of place."

She's right—to her and all those who have settled abroad, after a time, a city is a function of the heart. And you need a big heart to love this city. And an even bigger heart to choose to stay in this country.

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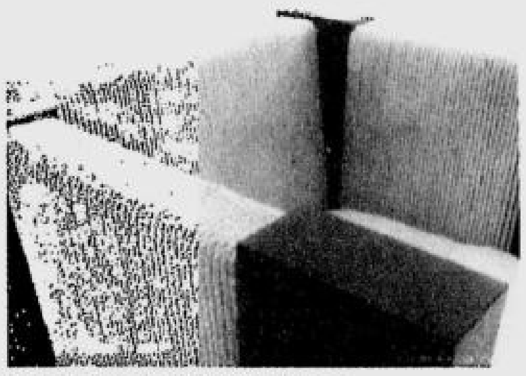
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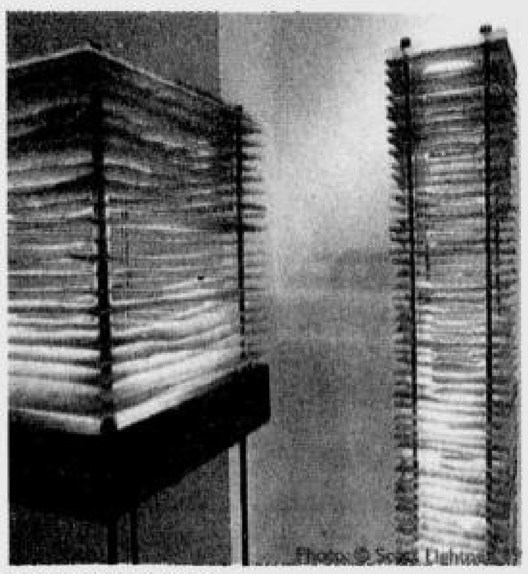
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